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TO MY SWEETHEART.

BY ERNEST ST. JOHN.

I shall see you, little one,
To-morrow night;
I shall kiss you, little one,
To-morrow night;
I shall hold you close to mine,
To-morrow night;
I shall press your cheek to mine,
To-morrow night;
I shall clasp you all the time,
To-morrow night!

Do you long for, little one,
To-morrow night?
Here's a song for little one
To-morrow night:
Ah! I love the Evening Star,
In her diamond-studded car,
But I'll love you greater far,
To-morrow night!

I will sing it, little one,
To-morrow night; I'll sing
I will bring it, little one,
To-morrow night; I'll bring
I will lay it in your hand,
To-morrow night; Oh, the fairest in the land,
Do you think you understand,
To-morrow night?

Ah! you're laughing at my rhyme!
And you're right;
But you'll surely change your mind
To-morrow night;
I shall stop your mouth with kisses;
I shall reap a crop of blisses;
I shall be the great Ulysse,
To-morrow night!

Well, good-night and pleasant dreams,
Sweetest light;
May the world be what it seems
To-morrow night;
I'll be solemn while I pray,
God be with you, Sweet, away,
May our severed night be day,
To-morrow night!

The Ace of Spades:

IOLA, THE STREET SWEEPER.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

CHAPTER XVII.

HOW THE "MARQUIS" LOVED ESSIE TROY.

The closet in which the old man lay was quite a large one, and was used by Mr. Tremaine as a receptacle for all his papers. "He was evidently in here when we entered the room," said Tremaine, "and not wishing to disturb us, remained an involuntary listener. The close air of the closet probably caused him to faint."

It was plain that Tremaine had guessed the truth for the gas was burning in the closet, and the old man held, tightly clutched in his hand, a bundle of leases.

"Do you think that he can have overheard what we have been saying?" asked Oswald. "It is probable," answered Tremaine; "but I do not fear his mentioning it. He is not a gossip."

Then the two carried the old man out into the library and placed him in a chair. All efforts to revive the secretary were fruitless. But that they could feel that his heart still beat slowly, they would have thought him dead.

Tremaine summoned the servants, the old man was removed to his room, undressed and put to bed, and a messenger dispatched for the doctor.

Doctor Dornon came in haste, and after examining the old man announced that he was laboring under a serious attack of brain fever. Before the arrival of the doctor the old man had recovered his speech, but not his senses; his words were wild and disordered. The doctor, listening attentively, could only catch one single sentence that seemed to have meaning in it; and that sentence the sick man muttered over and over again.

"Ace—black—all black—a spade to dig her grave!"

Such were the disjointed words of the old man.

The doctor scratched the side of his nose reflectively, a sign in him of deep thought.

"If he were a young man, I should say that he had been gambling; but, no, that isn't possible. There's a woman mixed up in it somehow; nothing wonderful in that though; women are mixed up in everything in this world. 'Ace' and 'a spade to dig her grave.' Well, it's a mystery. And the doctor returned to the library.

"What is the matter with him, doctor?" asked Tremaine.

"A brain fever."

Father and son looked at each other in astonishment.

"He must have received some great shock, either physical or mental," continued the doctor. "Has any accident happened to him?"

"No; he was in the closet yonder when Oswald and I entered the room, and apparently not wishing to disturb us, kept silent, for we had no idea of his presence until he swooned and fell from his chair to the floor. I supposed that the closeness of the air of the closet caused his faintness."

"It's a most astonishing case. Never, in the whole course of my medical experience, have I known of a case of brain fever produced by a simple fainting-fit caused by bad air. Could he overhear your conversation in the closet?"

"Yes, I think so," replied Tremaine.

"Did you touch upon any matters likely to interest him in the least?"

"No."

The doctor looked puzzled.

"Well, I confess I can not understand it. If, as it appears, he has received no accident

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"THAT'S HER!" SAID BILL, SAVAGELY.

of a physical nature, then he must have received some strong mental shock, and the brain, gentlemen, is a ticklish organ to deal with. I feel quite interested in this gentleman's case. By the way, have you any idea how old he is?"

"Well, sixty, I should think," replied Tremaine, wondering at the question.

"You judge by his face and hair, eh?" said the doctor, quickly.

"Yes," answered Tremaine.

"He does look like sixty in the face, and yet I never saw such an arm as he has on a man of sixty in my life," said the doctor, decidedly.

"You think he is younger, then?"

"I don't know what to think," replied the doctor, doubtfully. "In the first place, here's a man goes into a raging brain fever—clean out of his head, apparently as mad as a march hare—simply because he happens to be shut up in a closet for a few minutes. Then again this very same man has the frame and sinews of a Hercules and an arm that would do credit to a prize-fighter. Not the sort of a man, at all, to be affected by any common accident. I feel quite an interest in his case." And with these words the doctor departed.

Tremaine and his son, thrilled to the heart by the affliction that had fallen so heavily upon them, felt but little interest in the words of the doctor, or in the cause of the secretary's illness, and the subject was instantly dismissed from their minds.

Essie had recovered from her swoon, undressed, gone to bed and wept herself to sleep.

This was the first great affliction that had ever fallen upon the young girl, and amid her tears she asked the question of herself if any other had ever been thus afflicted?

And fully satisfied that death alone could relieve her misery she sobbed herself to sleep. In sleep she forgot her sorrows. Ah, Essie! time is one great slumber in which we forget all things. Time cures the deepest sorrow, heals the most terrible wounds. In years we find forgetfulness; it is the lethe of the fable in which we drown remembrance.

After a restless night to all the principal members of the Tremaine household, morning came.

The secretary, Whitehead, was still unconscious. The doctor, who called early to see his patient, pronounced his case to be very dangerous and declared that the chances were against his recovering.

About ten in the morning Tremaine was somewhat astonished at receiving a message that a gentleman desired to see him in person on particular business.

"What sort of a looking person is it?" he asked.

"A young man, quite a gentleman, sir," the servant answered.

"Did he give his name?"

"No, sir. I asked him for his name, but he said that it was useless for him to give it, because he was a stranger to you," answered the servant.

"Some genteel sharper, I suppose," said Tremaine. "John, tell this person to write his business. I am not in the habit of granting interviews to strangers."

The servant left the room, but in a few minutes he returned with a large card in his hand and a broad grin upon his face.

"He says, sir," said John, holding out the card, "that if you'll please to look at this card you'll understand the business that he comes about."

Tremaine took the card, considerably astonished at the strange message.

On the card was written "810 Fifth Avenue."

"Why, that is my address," Tremaine said. And then turning the card over, in

search of some solution to this odd mystery, the Ace of Spades stared him in the face.

In an instant the recollection of the card he had given Christine sixteen years before flashed upon him; the card that had indeed proved an omen of evil.

"What can this mean?" Tremaine muttered to himself, with a puzzled look. "Can this person have any connection with the past? Well, show him up, John," he said, aloud.

The servant withdrew, but in a few minutes returned conducting the "Marquis," who was the person who had sent the mysterious message.

"You may withdraw, John," said Tremaine to the servant, who stood discreetly at the door, waiting for orders.

The servant bowed and left the room, closing the door behind him.

"Well, sir, your business with me?" asked Tremaine, gazing with curiosity into the handsome face of the young man, and detecting in that face a strange resemblance to some other face that he had seen. But who the possessor of that face was he could not remember.

"That will require a short explanation, sir," said the "Marquis," with easy politeness.

"Proceed, sir," said Tremaine, vainly endeavoring to recall where he had seen the young man's face before, or if not his face the face that it so strongly resembled.

"Do you remember the year 1852?" asked the "Marquis."

Tremaine started. His thought then was right; his visitor had some connection with the events of that terrible night.

"Yes, sir, I remember; but to what particular part of the year have you reference?"

"The night of the 20th of September."

Despite his self-control, Tremaine shuddered.

"I am about to speak of a terrible event that happened on that night," continued the young man; "of a woman killed by lightning and a child rendered motherless."

"Well, sir, what has this to do with me?" Tremaine asked. He saw plainly that by some means the young man had gained a knowledge of the events of the dreadful night, the memory of which, even now, after the long lapse of years, was full of pain to him. Yet he felt sure that his strange visitor could not possibly possess any clue to connect him with those terrible events.

"Only that you are the father of the motherless child."

Tremaine stared in astonishment. There was no trace of hesitation in the stranger's voice as he made the charge. He spoke like one fully confident.

"Possibly, you have some proof of what you assert, or it will be difficult for you to make people believe your story," Tremaine said, slowly. He felt sure that he had guessed the object of the stranger's visit. By some unaccountable means he had become possessed of the history of that terrible night's transactions, and had come to levy blackmail as the price of silence.

"I see, sir," said Catterton, very politely, and with great respect in his manner, "that you do not understand why I have taken the liberty to call upon you. There is only one person in the world that I wish to impress with the belief that I speak the truth, and that person is yourself."

"Indeed?" Tremaine was bewildered.

"Yes, sir, and you know that I speak the truth when I say that you are the father of the girl known as Essie, and who is the daughter of Christine Averill. You will not deny this, when I tell you that I am the newsboy that placed the child in your arms that night, and who received a hundred dollars for that service. I followed you that night with the intent to find out who and what you were. I did not know your name,

though I did know where you resided, for I heard the lady read the address on the card after you had written it. That is what prompted me—when you refused to see me just now—to send you a facsimile of that card. You see, sir, I came prepared to be refused. As I have said, that night I tracked you—with a bad intent, I own, sir—until I was thrown off the scent by your taking the cars at the Hudson River depot. But the very first thing the next morning I came here and found out your name. Since these events sixteen years have passed—"

"It is useless for me to deny the truth of what you have said," cried Tremaine, interrupting him. "I suppose that your visit to me this morning is for the purpose of levying blackmail; you wish me to buy your silence?"

"No, sir," returned the "Marquis" firmly, but respectfully, "I don't wish you to do any thing of the kind. True, I might come to you, and say: I know all about the night of September 20th, 1852. I know that this girl whom you call Essie Troy is, in reality, Essie Averill. That she is your daughter; and that, possibly, if I were to make that fact known among your acquaintances, it might create considerable talk and submit the young lady—if not you—to some mortification. But I have no intention, sir, of doing any thing of the sort. I have called back the past, simply to show you that I was one of the actors in that past. I did you a service then; true, I was paid for it; but you are well aware, sir, that if I had asked you a thousand dollars for that infant you would have given it. Of course you are too old a man of the world, not to guess that I have some other object in making this call than simply to tell you that I am acquainted with a little of your past history. I own, frankly, that I have a favor to ask of you; but if you see fit not to grant that favor, I shall leave this house, take the secret concerning Miss Essie with me and keep it securely locked in my own breast as I have done for sixteen years."

Tremaine looked at the pale, quiet face of the "Marquis" with astonishment. That a man, who was evidently an adventurer, should possess such a secret, and yet not attempt to extort money as the price of silence, was indeed a wonder.

"Sir, I can hardly understand this riddle," said Tremaine.

"Do not try to," quietly replied the "Marquis," "let it remain a riddle. My motives for acting thus, will probably never be known. I love the girl, sir, that you have reared—whom you call Essie Troy—better than I do any thing else in this world, better than I do myself—and self-love you know is powerful, sir. But I would sooner give my right hand than have a single hour of gloom fall upon her young life."

"You are speaking very strangely, sir," cried Tremaine, in amazement.

"Yes, sir," returned the "Marquis," "because you do not know the reason that actuates me. That reason will never be known to any one in the world. Suffice it that it exists, and that I shall never do harm by word or deed to Miss Essie."

"And now, sir, what is this favor that you wish at my hands?"

"The loan, sir, of a thousand dollars—not a gift, mind, but a loan to be repaid. My way of life, sir, does not suit me. With the money I have, in addition to the thousand dollars loaned by you, I can start a good business and earn an honest living."

"But what assurance have I that this money will be repaid, and that this is not a blackmailing device?" asked Tremaine.

"At present, nothing but my word; but the moment I start in trade—I'm going to open a small book-store on Broadway—I'll give you a mortgage on my stock."

For a moment Tremaine looked into the face of the "Marquis," and in that face he saw written honesty.

"I'll do it!" he said, "and trust you."

And when Daniel Catterton, the "Marquis," left the house of Tremaine, he carried with him a check for a thousand dollars.

The "Marquis" was in the right road after all.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"OLD TIMES ROCKS."

IOLA had been in the paper-box manufactory three days, and was as happy as happy could be. Each evening the "Marquis" called to see her and spent an hour or two in the little parlor. Catterton could not understand what made the hours pass so pleasantly and so swiftly when he was in Iola's company. The girl did not try to understand. It was enough for her that she was happy in his society, she did not question why.

The evening of the third day had come. Iola descended the long flights of stairs that led from the manufactory to the street, light and joyous as a bird on a bright May morning, and took her way home.

Iola little thought that evil eyes were watching her, that brutal hearts were laying snares for her feet.

On the other side of the street, in a doorway, stood two men; one of them is well-known to us, it is Mr. William Thompson, otherwise known as English Bill. His companion was a rough-looking fellow, not quite so burly in form as Bill. He was known as Curly Rocks, and sometimes familiarly called by his associates "Old Times Rocks," probably on account of his long association with the roughs of Water street, he having been brought up from childhood in that delightful region.

"That's her, curse her!" cried Bill, savagely.

Accident had revealed to Bill Iola's working place.

Ever since the girl's sudden and unaccountable disappearance Bill had hunted high and low for the missing one. His search had been fruitless until happening with Curly Rocks to be passing down Canal street, he saw, to his great delight, Iola come out of the building in which was situated her workshop.

"Is that so?" asked Rocks, who was not acquainted with Iola.

"And now I've got my eyes on her, blast her, I'll soon have her in my hands again," Bill exclaimed with ferocious delight.

"Why don't you go right over, take her by the nap of the neck and snake her off home, say?" exclaimed Curly, who was an extremely practical ruffian.

"An' have her holler blue murder an' then have the police come down onto us an' take us both off to the station!" returned Bill.

"Well, wot of that?" cried Curly, "she's your gal, ain't she? Ain't you got a right to do wot you like with her? Wot's the use of bein' a father if you ain't got a right to take your gal home when she runs away from you, I'd like to know?"

"Well, I don't want to have any fuss," replied Bill, "I'd rather git hold of the young brat quietly. Besides I want to find out who dressed her up this way. She ain't gone to the devil, as I thought, 'cos she wouldn't be a-workin' if she was. Let's foller her an' see where she goes to."

And so the two roughs started in pursuit of Iola, being careful, however, not to betray to her that she was followed.

Iola went straight to her home as usual.

Bill and Curly saw her enter the door of the boarding-house.

The game was treed.

"I'd like to know where she got all those new logs?" growled Bill.

"She looks as gay as a pink!" cried Curly, admiringly.

"I'll soon change her looks, let me git my hands on her ag'in!" said Bill, savagely.

"Well now, old man, wot's the programme, eh?" asked Curly.

"To git hold of her as soon as possible," returned Bill, fiercely.

"Yes, but how are ye a-goin' fer to do it, 'cos I rather fancy that the gal won't come with you, herself, if she knows it; not much, you know," and Curly put his tongue in his cheek, significantly.

"That's so, curse her!" cried Bill, in a rage, "let me git hold on her ag'in, I'll take the devil out of her—I'll tame her!"

"Yes, but how are you a-goin' to git hold on her? Unless you walks up to the front-door, rings the bell an' says 'My name's William Thompson, you've got my gal here an' I want's her.' An' if the young'un should happen to reply, 'Don't you wish you may git it,' or, 'Will you hold your breath till I go with you,' or any other perille observation, what are you a-goin' to do about it? unless you calls in the police, for to make her go with you," observed the playful and sagacious Curly.

"You just leave me alone, I'll fix it some way," said Bill, "but I'd like to know where she got that new dress. Dresses don't lay round loose in the streets of New York."

"That's so," chimed in Curly.

"She would never have run off unless some one told her to, an' fixed a place for her to go to. I'd give something to find out all about it," said Bill, thoughtfully.

"Evenin' News, only one cent!" yelled a boy's voice close at Curly's elbow. "Hello! buy a paper, Bill!" continued the voice.

The roughs turned and beheld the news-boy called Shorty.

"No, I don't want no paper," gruffly said Bill.

"Say, you don't trust, Shorty, do yer?" asked Curly, who had a keen sense of the humorous.

"Trust! what do you take me for, say?"

demanded Shorty. "I does a cash business, regular, 'cos it's too much trouble to keep books."

Bill was deeply cogitating how he should learn all the particulars regarding Iola, when an idea struck him.

"Say, Shorty," said Bill, "would you like to make a dollar?"

"Would I?" exclaimed the boy, his eyes gleaming. "Oh, no! not much, not for Joe! Just you show me how I kin make a dollar, an' see me go for it."

"Well, my gal, Io, is over in that house there—the brick boarding-house. Now you just find out all about her that you can; who brought her there, who comes to see her, an' I'll give you a dollar."

"Yer will?"

"Yer will?" said Bill, "would you like to make a dollar?"

"Why you are a reg'lar rounder, you are! Just you wait here a minit an' I'll find out all 'bout it. I sells papers to the cook over there, I does," and with these parting words, Shorty ran across the street, and disappeared down the basement-steps.

"I've got her!" cried Bill, with ferocious glee; "I'll have her in my hands afore this night's over; see if I don't!"

CHAPTER XIX.

ENGLISH BILL'S "LITTLE GAME."

IS about ten minutes the newsboy returned. He had found out all that the cook knew in regard to Iola, and that was, that she had only been in the boarding-house some few days, and that a young gentleman—some relation, the cook supposed—called upon her every evening at eight o'clock.

"What was the name of the cove?" asked Curly.

"Catterton," answered the boy.

"Oh, split me!" cried Curly, in astonishment.

"What's the matter?" asked Bill. He had forgotten the name of the "Marquis," accustomed as he was only to call him by his sporting name.

"Why, that's 'Dan the Devil,' the fellow you got after the other night!" cried Curly.

"The devil it is!" exclaimed Bill.

"That's so," answered the other.

"Then, he's the one that took the gal away. I'll be even with him yet!" and Bill's manner showed plainly how deeply he hated the young man.

"Say, old boss, you promised me a dollar!" cried the newsboy.

"Here it is," and Bill handed the note to Shorty.

"I say, Shorty, ain't you a-goin' to treat?" asked Curly.

"Does your mother know you're out?" was the ambiguous response of the newsboy; and without waiting for an answer to his question, he darted up the street and was soon busy crying his papers.

"What's your little game?" asked Curly.

"Just you wait a little while an' you'll see," replied Bill.

"I'll keep the hair on my head," by which expressive sentence, Curly intimated that he would wait.

"Say, Rocks, do you think you can play a perfect detective?" Bill asked.

"Well, I don't know; I ought to. I've seen a good deal of 'em," returned Curly, with a grin.

"You kin do it, I know. I'll tell you not to say as we go along."

"Where are you goin'?"

"Up to Chatham Square. I want a hack, an' Patsy Duke stands up there. He's all right, he is. Say, will you join in my little game?"

"You bet!" Curly replied, using the slang term from the far Pacific coast.

And so the pair of knaves walked slowly up to Chatham Square, Bill explaining his "little game" as they walked along.

Iola had just finished supper when the door-bell rung and Mrs. Wiggins, going to the door, returned with the information that a man wanted to see Miss Thompson.

Iola could not imagine who it was, but went at once to the door. Upon perceiving the rough-looking man that stood there she hesitated in some little alarm. But as the landlady, Mrs. Wiggins, was close behind her, she knew that there could be no danger.

"Are you Miss Thompson?" asked the man, in quite a polite tone for one so rough as he.

"Yes, sir," answered Iola.

"Well, miss, I am a detective officer; my name is Jones. There's a friend of yours—Mr. Catterton—got into trouble 'bout assaulting a feller on Broadway, named English Bill, the other night, an' he wants you to come up to the station an' testify for him, 'cos, he said that you seed the whole fuss."

"What will they do to Mr. Catterton?" asked Iola, in dismay at the thought of any danger coming to her friend and on her account too.

"Oh, nothin', miss; you kin git him right out of it just by telling what you know," answered Mr. Jones.

"Shall I have to go to the police-station?" asked Iola.

"Yes, right away; too. Mr. Catterton sent a hack for you. It won't take ten minutes to fix the fuss up all right."

"What shall I do, Mrs. Wiggins?" said Iola, feeling a doubt, despite the words of the stranger.

"Why, go, of course, my dear!" cried the landlady, quickly, no thought of evil entering her mind. "Good gracious! Mr. Catterton is such a nice young man!"

"Yes, ma'am, he's a reg'lar brick!" said Mr. Jones.

"Can this lady go with me?" asked Iola, still feeling a doubt in her mind.

"In course!" cried the detective, quickly; "come right along, ma'am."

Assured at last, Iola hurried up-stairs for her hat and cloak, while Mrs. Wiggins rushed hastily for her bonnet and shawl.

"He is in danger, and on my account!" cried Iola, as with trembling hands she threw the cloak over her shoulders; "how good he has been to me!"

Then Iola ran down-stairs—her mind now filled with only one thought, the danger of the "Marquis."

The dusk of the evening was upon the street, and the gas was being lighted in the stores.

Iola and Mrs. Wiggins went out through the door. In the street stood a hack.

"Mr. Brown, my pardner, 's inside, ma'am," said the detective as he opened the hack door for Iola to enter. She, in the dim light, saw the dark form of a man sitting on the front seat, apparently looking out of the opposite window, for his face was turned from her.

Lightly Iola jumped into the hack. The detective turned to give his hand to Mrs. Wiggins, when the hack suddenly drove off at full speed, and left Mr. Jones and Mrs. Wiggins standing on the curb-stone.

"Hallo!" shouted the detective, but the hack-driver drove on without looking behind him or paying the slightest attention to the call.

"Well, of all the stupid brutes!" said Mr. Jones, apparently deeply disgusted.

"Whatever shall we do?" asked Mrs. Wiggins.

"Why, we can walk to the office, ma'am; it's only up in Harlem."

"Harlem! walk to Harlem!" cried the astonished Mrs. Wiggins.

"Why no, of course not. We can take a hoss-car."

"Well, I don't know as there is really any need of my going," said Mrs. Wiggins, thoughtfully. "I s'pose you'll see that the young lady comes home all safe?"

"Oh, in course," responded the detective, with urbanity, "in course I'll bring her home all right. Don't you worry 'bout that, ma'am. I'm very sorry that you couldn't go, but I'll never employ that brute of a driver ag'in. Good-night, ma'am," and the detective, Mr. Jones, hastened off.

"Well I never," muttered Mrs. Wiggins, as she returned, disconsolate, to the house, "the impudence and carelessness of them hack-drivers is wonderful. I don't see how people stands it." And the good lady somewhat relieved her mind by telling the boarders how she was left standing on the pavement; what a real gentleman the detective, Mr. Jones, was, and how sorry he felt that she had been left.

About eight o'clock the door-bell rung. Mrs. Wiggins hastened to answer it, expecting that it was Iola returned. When she opened the door she discovered to her surprise that the person who had rung the bell was Mr. Catterton, and that he was alone.

"Well, I'm glad you've got out!" cried Mrs. Wiggins, with a smile of welcome, "but where is Miss Iola?"

Catterton looked at the lady with amazement.

"Why, how should I know?" he asked. "Hain't she come back with you?" asked Mrs. Wiggins, no less astonished than her visitor.

"Come back with me?" exclaimed Catterton; "why no, of course not. How could she?"

Mrs. Wiggins now stared at the young man with wonder. Her first thought was that the "Marquis" had been drinking, but if he had, he showed no signs of it.

"Oh, I see!" cried Mrs. Wiggins, a light breaking in upon her clouded mind. "She's coming in the coach!"

"The coach!" cried Catterton, in blank amazement.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Wiggins, perfectly satisfied that she had hit upon the true solution of the mystery; "but how did you get out, and why didn't you come with Miss Iola?"

"How did I get out?" repeated Catterton, beginning to think that Mrs. Wiggins was slightly insane.

"Yes, and why didn't you come back with Miss Iola?" repeated Mrs. Wiggins.

"I can't understand you," cried the "Marquis," not able to make sense out of her questions.

"Well, I'm sure I speak plain enough!" exclaimed Mrs. Wiggins, considerably astonished, and beginning to be a little indignant.

"My dear madam!" exclaimed Catterton, plainly seeing that there was a misunderstanding somewhere, "what on earth do you mean by asking me how I got out, and why I didn't come back with Miss Iola?"

"Why out of the station-house in Harlem?" Mrs. Wiggins felt considerably bewildered.

Catterton felt sure now that Mrs. Wiggins was out of her head.

"I've not been in any station-house in Harlem or anywhere else!" exclaimed the "Marquis."

"I haven't been in Harlem for a year."

"Not been in Harlem?" cried Mrs. Wiggins, at the top of her voice.

"No!" exclaimed Catterton, in astonishment.

"Hain't you been arrested?" in the same high key.

"No!"

"Oh Lor'!" and Mrs. Wiggins threw up her hands in dismay.

The loud tone of the conversation had brought the boarders in alarm out of their rooms, and anxious heads were peering over the stair-railing, curious to discover the meaning of the unusual noise.

"Why, what's the matter?" cried Catterton, for the first time beginning to be alarmed, and having a dim fear that possibly something might have happened to Iola.

"Oh, Lor'!" repeated Mrs. Wiggins, half fainting in her excitement; "a gent come as said that his name was Jones and he was a detective officer, an' he asked after Miss Thompson, quite polite like, an' he said as how you had been arrested for 'sauntin' somebody, an' she must go right away for a witness, an' she asked me for to go with her, an' we got our things on an' she got into the coach, an' no sooner had she got in, than the coachman—the villain! hanging's too good for him—he drove off an' left me an' the detective, as said his name was Jones, a-standin' on the blessed sidewalk!"

"Is it possible?" cried Catterton, almost bewildered at this sudden blow, for the whole scheme was clear to him in an instant. He saw plainly that Iola had been abducted.

"Possible it is, an' quite correct!" cried Mrs. Wiggins, "an' the gent as said he was a detective and his name was Jones, was quite polite, an' said he'd bring Miss Iola back all safe."

"This is some mistake," said Catterton. He did not care to enter into particulars, which could do no good and might do mischief. "Some one else has probably been mistaken for me. I'll go and see about it at once."

And Catterton at once departed, leaving the Wiggins' household in a state of great excitement.

The "Marquis" knew full well that the abductor of Iola could be no other than English Bill.

(Continued next week—commenced in No. 9.)

The Shadowed Heart:

OR,
THE ILL-STARRED MARRIAGE.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

AUTHOR OF "THE IRON MASK," "SCARLET CHERUB," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VI.

THE UNHAPPY MOTHER AND THE FLAME.

THE ride from Rose Cottage, in the society of his idolized Maude, with Helen Joyce on the opposite side of him, was not as delightful as it might have been, and when at the open archway, the two halted, while Helen seemed undecided whether to return home with Maude or not. Fred Trevlyn decided the matter very quickly if not gallantly.

"Good-afternoon, Miss Joyce. Miss Maude and I will not come in, thank you."

Then touching Maude's pony with his whip, and bowing as his own Fleet darted off, obedient to the touch of the bride, they galloped away.

It was a perfect afternoon, cool and breezy, and the buoyant atmosphere incited the riders to a longer race than the short distance to the Grange. For several minutes, neither had spoken, and then Maude broke the silence.

"Poor George, I do earnestly hope he will recover sufficiently to come home this evening."

"Then his society is so very desirable, I conclude. More so than that of any other mortal?"

He laughed savagely, wondering within himself how he dared to say what he had spoken.

Maude looked proudly at him.

"Why should not my future husband be the nearest and dearest of all men?"

Fred Trevlyn reined his horse close beside her, and bent his head to her ear.

"He ought to be, he would be, but you do not love him."

Like lightning she turned upon him.

"You transcend your rights as a friend, Mr. Trevlyn; pray, who gave you your information?"

But a vivid blush was slowly tinting her face, and she felt her companion's dark, passionate eyes reading her own.

"No one told me; my own observation noted it, and my own heart taught me the secret. Maude Elverton, you are not the woman for George Casselmaine!"

He spoke hotly, vehemently.

"Not good enough, perhaps?" asked Maude, half in jest, partly to cover her confusion.

"Maude! how dare you misconstrue me?"

In bitter authority—a power she recognized in every fiber of her being—he spoke, and, ere she framed a reply, he burst forth again:

"I repeat it—George Casselmaine is not suited to you, to your wants, or your expectations. You need not only a husband who shall lead, direct and guard you, but you want a lover, who shall cherish, worship, and adore you. Your betrothed can not do that; he does not love you as much as another does—one who I know sins in the depth of his love for you, who, if he dare, would be the husband-lover!"

His dark eyes and stern face were tender and loving as he bent so near her crimson cheek, so close he almost heard the wild heart beat—the throbbing of priest ecstasy as Maude thought, "He loves me!"

It was fearful ground he was treading on, and he well knew it. But, as stolen sweets are most enjoyed, so did Frederic Trevlyn revel in the enjoyment of an interview he felt was only a bitter tantalization.

For, in the brief moments he spent in Maude Elverton's presence, he partially forgot his sorrow, his chains, the deep gulf between him and his love. He forgot the sacred room at the Archery, and its contents; he forgot all—every thing, save the fierce, hopeless passion for her, and, to-day, from the overcharged depths of his heart he had said the words that sent such warm thrills all over Maude.

And yet, with the voice of conscience, duty and prudence ringing so loudly in his ears, Frederic Trevlyn would not listen, but madly pursued his rash way.

He had been so unhappy—he reasoned—so miserably lonely until this sweet face flitted across his vision, this lovely charmer came to woo and enslave him. Maude Elverton was the first human being who ever, in all Frederic Trevlyn's life, possessed the power of awakening the master-passion in his heart, to touch the resounding chord of love, which vibrated so fiercely, so ceaselessly.

This, then, the only dream of joy he had ever known, would come, at last, to a rude awakening. His darling would marry George Casselmaine.

He shivered to the very soul at this thought, and when he looked quickly up, he met Maude's gaze, tender, almost loving, but with a half-savage smile, he started their horses rapidly along.

"One doesn't care to ride slowly along this gloomy road, especially when their escort is as stupid as yours."

Maude might have expected a far different remark than this, so very unlike the last words he had spoken. But, Maude Elverton was not the woman to let any man note such a feeling, and eagerly as Frederic Trevlyn read her face, he detected no shadow of what was passing within, and a fierce pang shot through him, half jealous, that she did not care for him, half angry, that he cared so much for her.

"There is the Archery," and Maude pointed to the cupola glistening among the trees.

"It is a wonder that you are not afraid to pass such an ill-spoken-of place at dusk, too. Most ladies avoid it, as though it were peopled with hobgoblins instead of human beings like myself, but not much better than fiends, after all."

"Why, Mr. Trevlyn, how you speak! Making such sport of your elegant home, and comparing yourself to a fiend!"

Maude's answer was quickly and indignantly uttered, and she raised her eyes fearlessly to his.

He smiled in his own peculiar winning way; a rare smile, and one as rarely indulged in; one which, despite herself, brought a flush to her face, as she turned her eyes away.

"Then you admire the Archery, and do not think me quite a demon?"

"I have considered you a friend, Mr. Trevlyn, and is not that proof I do not regard you in such a wicked light?"

"Then you regard me wrongly, Maude Elverton. I am a wicked man, whose greatest sin is my only joy. You may well look confounded at my language, but it is true—too true."

He paused, evidently awaiting an answer, but none came.

"I know not why I am prompted to speak of these things to you, unless my evil genius, who is ever present, urges me on, but certain it is I am strongly inclined to tell you my troubles, my griefs—no, pardon me, I have forgotten myself."

He bowed coldly—this strange, inexplicable lover of hers—and, as Maude stole a glance at his stern, stormy face, she saw the fixed expression of stony grief, so near akin to despair, that she pitied him tenderly.

"Mr. Trevlyn, tell me, I beg: That you are laboring under a severe agony of mind, I easily see, and deeply regret. Please confide in me, my friend; perhaps a confidante will relieve your feelings. I think I can sympathize with you."

Unconsciously she laid her hand on his arm, and looked imploringly in his face. He turned away, by a mighty effort, for the temptation pressed him strongly.

Maude Elverton's warm, life-giving touch on his arm; her sweet voice beseeching the story he dared not tell, and could scarcely conceal! It was almost madness, and yet the words trembled on his lips; had not his good angel intercepted, Maude Elverton would have heard the words her heart was so earnestly craving, and he himself would have been deeper sunk in sorrow and remorse.

"I thank you," and his tones were low and gentle, "but I dare not! You lay your hand in all confidence in mine, now, and call me friend. Did you know my wickedness, my sin, you would hate me, and your hate would be to me worse than death."

Again the lightning-flash of unrestrained delight thrilled over Maude, but she gently removed her arm. For a moment she was silent, then, ere she could reply, Frederic addressed her:

"As true friends, dear friends, I hope we will part to-day. After to-day, I will not meet you often. I can not, I dare not!"

With a haughty bow, Maude answered him, while the angry blood rushed to her brow.

"Thank you, sir. Our roads diverge here. Good-afternoon."

She touched the lash to her horse, and bounded down the Grange road, but not quicker than Frederic followed.

"No," he said, grasping the oridle, and bringing them face to face, "we will not part thus. Listen, Maude Elverton, and look in my face. Does not your heart tell you why I say we must not meet? Does not your heart bear witness to what I dare not say, and what you dare not hear?"

She did not remove her eyes from off his face, until the last words were spoken; then, with a sudden movement, wrenched herself free from his hand, so hot and trembling.

There ensued a silence, and Maude's heart throbbed almost audibly. Never before had Frederic Trevlyn suggested his love so plainly, and now she thought he referred to her betrothal to George Casselmaine, as the impassable barrier to his love for her. Like a sudden flash of light came the thought, that her lover, her rightful lover was not the one who wore her ring, who would call her wife, when the summer came again: "She knew Fred Trevlyn loved her, and she knew she loved him. She had heard how cold, repellent and haughty the handsome owner of the Archery was, and how no woman ever succeeded in winning a smile of love or word of affection from him. And from all this ice-bound sea of coldness and sternness, the love for her had come, a rushing, mighty torrent that naught might stay." She, she was the recipient of this love, the object of this passion! and the flush deepened on her cheek at the thought.

"Well?" he asked, gently.

His voice, loving and beloved as its tones were, recalled her to herself, and with a fierce, almost stern voice, she answered him. And her answer saved him.

"Mr. Casselmaine, my future husband, certainly will not object to my friend Mr. Trevlyn calling as usual at the Grange."

Was he awake? Could it be possible this was Maude, his darling, speaking so cruelly, so entirely disregarding of the meaning of his question? He looked earnestly at her, but her sweet face gave no sign of the fierce tumult within. He drew a breath of relief, and yet tinged with exquisite grief.

"I have but one request to ask. Promise me never to give George Casselmaine up. Promise, Maude Elverton! Your sacred promise alone will save me from eternal ruin!"

Eagerly, wildly he scanned her face.

"I shall certainly marry George Casselmaine. Are you satisfied?"

So strangely at variance with his words but a short time before, when he told her George Casselmaine could never be the husband she would need, he seemed madly delighted with her reply.

"God bless you, Maude Elverton! You have saved me—have saved yourself!"

He caught her hand, and covered it with hot kisses; then, stooping suddenly, pressed one long kiss on her lips.

"I shall not ask your pardon; I do not desire your forgiveness, but I will not repeat the offense—never, alas! never!"

The tears, sprung to her eyes, but she dashed them away, just as they passed by the Grange gate.

Frederic turned abruptly away, and without a word or bow, galloped home.

Almost listlessly, certainly very wearily, Maude entered the house, to apprise her parents of the accident to their guest.

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"No," he said, grasping the oridle, and bringing them face to face, "we will not part thus. Listen, Maude Elverton, and look in my face. Does not your heart tell you why I say we must not meet? Does not your heart bear witness to what I dare not say, and what you dare not hear?"

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"I have but one request to ask. Promise me never to give George Casselmaine up. Promise, Maude Elverton! Your sacred promise alone will save me from eternal ruin!"

Eagerly,



ton—beauteous, enchanting and refined, possessing every qualification his wife should possess, except the one consideration of a love that was from the soul.

To George Casselmaine, a marriage without this love was a mockery to which he could not, would not consent. Not that he, entertained the most remote idea of giving up his beautiful Maude, but he determined to grow to love her; and when the time came that he could in all truth claim her as his wife, the marriage might be solemnized, and never till then.

Rather than learn to love, George Casselmaine wished it might have burst upon him at once. He wished, when he first saw her, the right feeling had come, and this was what his heart was starving for, the while he was nobly striving to cultivate the coy passion.

His thoughts were assuming a serious import, and he was growing restless and impatient, when, suddenly, the door opened.

He was so entirely unprepared for the vision that burst upon him, that he cared not to restrain the exclamation that rose to his lips, and a bright smile welcomed his attendant as she blushing advanced to his side.

Ida extended her hand cordially.

"You have awakened, I perceive, sir. You feel much better, do you not?"

"Thanks to some one's skillfulness, yes; and that some one I believe is yourself. Is it not?"

Ida smiled pleasantly.

"I certainly attended to you, but how skillfully I can not say."

"And to whom am I thus everlastingly indebted?"

"The admiring, withal, courteous glance sent the wild blood to her face as she answered."

"I am Ida Tressel."

"Ida Tressel?"

Unconsciously his lips repeated the name.

"I will confess so sweet a name surprises me in this country place."

His winning smile and gentle tones were making sad inroads on Ida's heart, but she bravely smothered every shadow of her feelings.

"What must you think then of the title of the dwelling you are in? We call it 'Rose Cottage.'"

"Ida Tressel of Rose Cottage! I shall never forget that. I think it is the sweetest sound I ever heard."

George Casselmaine spoke truthfully, and Ida's face blushed with pleasure.

"I have prepared a light lunch for you, sir, and if you are ready I will bring it up."

"All ready, except that I'll have some water and a napkin first. I'm rather dusty."

Ida poured from the water-vase a basin of cool water, and set it on a chair by the bed; then hung a clean, perfumed towel beside it.

With a careless movement, George arose to a sitting posture, and essayed to turn back his cuffs, but a sudden faintness seized him, and, his face as death, he was forced to lie down again.

In a moment the girlness passed away, and looking toward Ida, he smiled mischievously.

"Miss Tressel, you will pardon my presumption in daring to suggest such a thing, but really I am unable to bathe my face."

"She hesitated a moment, just as Hetty entered the room."

"Aunt Hetty can assist you," she said, pointing to the sable attendant who carried the tray of edibles.

George cast an imploring glance at her which said, plainly as looks might say—lie much preferred Ida's ministry. But, she was dumb to his glance, and, as Aunt Hetty deposited the waiter on the stand, was about to request her assistance. But Casselmaine superseded her.

"Miss Tressel, if it is not too much trouble, would you please help me bathe my face?"

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"She hesitated a moment, just as Hetty entered the room."

"No, Miss Tressel," and he caught both her hands, while a rich bloom tinted her cheeks; "no; you shall tell me if I look well. Do I? Are you satisfied with me?"

"Was she satisfied?" how that innocent question made her quiver. Satisfied with George Casselmaine! but she raised her lids, and glanced timidly at the handsome invalid.

"I am perfectly satisfied, sir. Your hair is arranged very becomingly, I think."

"Let me see for myself, please."

He looked earnestly in her eyes, so flooded with the love-light in their depths; he looked eagerly, and when she could no longer return his searching glance, with a faint cry she buried her scarlet cheeks in her hands. Casselmaine, detained one hand, as a reward of courtesy.

"Miss Ida, I beg your pardon. I was cruel, barbarous, to tax your modesty, to try your patience so. Forgive me, my kind nurse, my little attendant, will you?"

His smile was bright—his tones earnest, but, Ida saw not the one, if she heard the other. She only knew that perhaps he had read her secret in her tell-tale eyes; and that were worse than never being loved.

"Look at me for a single moment, and I promise not to offend again."

He placed his hand under her chin and gently raised her face, so their eyes met.

"You forgive me, freely forgive my rudeness? and will grant me a great favor to prove my unreserved pardon?"

"I shall think nothing of it," she murmured, striving to appear indifferent.

"Thank you, thank you; but the boon I crave is, that you will condescend to regard me as a friend, one who may by friendly acts atone for this one ungentlemanly deed. May I call you my friend—will you acknowledge me yours?"

A thrill of wild rapture filled Ida's heart, that fluttered and throbbed in her glad emotion. Without a word she extended her hand. Casselmaine grasped it cordially, and the compact was sealed.

George and Ida were to be friends.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MAIDEN'S SCORN.

THE intervening days had passed, and Sunday had come, when Ida's gray-haired suitor was to make his proposals. George Casselmaine had two days before returned to the Grange, leaving the sweet memory of his brief stay at Rose Cottage, for Ida's solace, and carrying with him a small vignette of hers, which he had insisted on retaining as a souvenir of the pleasant episode in his life, no less than a memento of their mutual friendship. He had gone to Maude again—only to dream of his charming nurse.

And Ida, in a state semi-joyous, equally wretched, awaited his coming again; but, meanwhile prepared to meet Andrew Joyce.

The long, warm autumn afternoon was slowly passing on, and Mr. Tressel and Ida were quietly sitting in the little vine-shaded porch, their usual place of *siesta* on those lovely summer days.

"My child," spoke her father, "our guest comes; welcome him as becomes us."

The tottering old man stepped on the porch, a foolish smile of gallantry playing on his withered lips as he reached his hand to Ida, with the other clutching the gold-headed cane, without which he was powerless.

A scornful expression of her face answered his salutation, and she remained silent.

"Sit down, neighbor, sit down; Ida will wheel the easy-chair up for you."

Mr. Tressel darted a reproving glance at his daughter's cold, proud face.

"Never mind, my beauty. To be sure I am no gay young lover coming a wooing, but the gold in my pocket will balance all that, eh?"

His dim blue eyes sought Ida's, but with a gesture of disgust she turned away.

"Ida," spoke her father, sternly, while Mr. Joyce endeavored to assume an air of profound dignity, "the time for silly trifling has gone by. You well know the object of Mr. Joyce's visit here to-day, and he knows you are aware of it. He comes to repeat to you what he said to me; he comes to hear from you what I have promised him."

Proudly stern, Ida listened to her father's words, and replied by a careless nod, and a slight smile of contempt.

"Yes, sweet Ida, I come for the express purpose of offering you my hand and heart; one full of gold and jewels for my lovely bride, the other full of love for my charming wife."

He bowed respectfully, while a sickening shiver ran over her frame.

"You do not reply," he continued, softly. "I will add, I have the full, free consent of your father, who has further sworn to keep his word—that you should be Mrs. Joyce. When I am made happy by addressing you so, the great study of my life will begin—to make you happy, to gratify your slightest wish. I love you fondly. Will you be my wife?"

"Never, never!" cried she. "I never will wreck my happiness by binding my young life to yours; I despise, I hate you!"

"Be silent, till you can use choicer language," angrily commanded her father.

"Do not mind her; it is only maiden coyness," said old Andrew Joyce, endeavoring to reconcile the two.

"It is not," she replied, sternly. "Maiden coyness has no affinity with aged imbecility. When an old, decrepit man of seventy seeks to marry a girl of not a

third his years, womanly anger takes the place of maiden coyness. Again I repeat, you had better keep your overtures for some one more anxious for the gold and jewels you seem so determined shall buy you a wife."

Her eyes flashed fiercely, and she confronted both the old men, while old Aunt Hetty pitied her from her far-off seat in the little back kitchen.

"Your father has passed his word, and he will not break it. When once I have the right to call you mine, you will learn how kind and loving I am, and you will never repent your choice."

"I shall never repent, for I shall not commit any thing worthy of repentance. My father may promise me to whom he sees fit, but it remains for me to fulfill that promise, which, rest assured, Mr. Joyce, will never be done by me."

Mr. Tressel arose, enraged, from his seat.

"You shall be more reverent; I command it. You shall tell your suitor what I have told him."

"Do not reproach me, father. I mean no disrespect for you. I, alone, am the insulted one, who will stand up for my rights."

"Pray, Miss Ida, listen, and let me tell you how dearly the old man loves you."

"Be silent, sir," she commanded, imperiously. "Your language inspires me with horror, with disgust. You are not a man, or you would cease your unwelcome, importunate avowal. No man with any spirit would pursue a woman with such distasteful protestations."

Proudly and with innate dignity she looked at the bent form before her.

"I have enough spirit to continue to strive for the treasure I swear I shall obtain," he replied, angrily, clenching his fist on the arm of the chair.

She gestured him away, and then turned to withdraw to her room.

"No, Ida Tressel, you disobedient child, you shall hear me. You dare not reject this offer."

"What! I dare not bestow my love upon whom I will?"

"No. Your old, infirm father, who has worked and toiled these three-score years for you, commands you instantly to accept your suitor. By the authority of a parent, I beseech you."

Ida smiled in supreme disdain. "No earthly power, nor human ingenuity is able to coerce me in this affair. I never shall, never can, be persuaded to marry old Andrew Joyce."

Like an enraged lioness she exultingly confronted her father and her guest.

"One moment, if it pleases you, my dear young lady. May I speak? I would beg to know if you have a prior engagement which is the obstacle between us?"

A vivid blush mantled Ida's brow, but she did not deign to reply. Her father answered for her.

"She loves, but has no lover, sir."

His sarcastic words, the cutting tone in which they were spoken, stung her to the quick, and she turned fiercely upon them, her face aglow.

"Since you inform your guest so far, allow me to confess the entire truth. Know you, then, Andrew Joyce, that I do love another with all the passion of my soul. I will die loving him, whether I am beloved or not."

Her sweet face was lighted by the holy fires within, and she seemed glorified as she told her ardent love for her idol.

"Poor girl, poor girl," muttered Joyce. "I can appreciate your feelings."

"You appreciate—*you!*" she retorted, scornfully. "The man who is old enough to be my great-grandfather, whose youngest daughter is ten years older than I! You appreciate!"

Mr. Joyce smiled compassionately.

"Such overwhelming affection must be a fairy tale. This confession is a falsehood, then, for you told me but a few moments before you would never marry."

"I referred to yourself, sir. I shall never marry, unless it is the one I love. I have told you my final, unalterable decision. I shall not allow so loathsome a subject to annoy me again."

With a courtesy she left the room.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SCORNED WIFE.

THE Quaker City had just fallen into the first sound doze on a cool, starry September night, and the windows of the elegant bazaar on Chestnut street were long since closed. Lights were extinguished in the elegant mansions on the aristocratic uptown streets, save where at intervals a solitary watcher kept guard over the couch of illness.

The train from New York had arrived an hour before, and the passengers reached their destinations. The spacious Kensington depot was occupied by but one, of the hundreds that lately increased the bustle there.

The one passenger was a gentleman, tall, handsome, and commanding, who motioned to a cabman.

"Drive to Arch street, number 1—"

Tossing his overcoat within the cab, and following with his hand-valise, he closed the door, bade the driver go on, and reclined on the cushions, while the cab hurried onward.

With a lurch that aroused him, so violent was it, he gazed from the window. The cab had drawn up to a large, imposing

residence, whose stately front frowned in unrelieved darkness. No ray of light was visible, and as he cast a hasty glance from basement to roof, a bitter smile darkened his features.

Without a word, he thrust a bill in the cabman's hand, and with coat and sachel in hand, ascended the steps.

He did not try the door, for, of course, at that hour of the night every door was securely fastened, but from his vest-pocket he took a tiny key, which he fitted, and opened the heavy walnut door.

A faint light in the chandelier in the hall illumined the splendid decorations of the broad, low staircase, the frescoed walls, the statuary in the niches, the velvet-carpeted floor. Beyond the ground-glass doors, draped with costly lace, which stood slightly ajar, he saw the massive sideboard, fraught with its precious weight of silver and glass. The view was a beautiful one, but it was only a quick, scornful glance he deigned to bestow, and hanging his overcoat on the ebony rack, and leaving his valise and hat beside it, the stranger ascended the stairs.

The soft Aubusson carpet gave back no sound of his footfall, and, silent and unseen, he continued his way.

From the door of the front chamber a light gleamed through the keyhole. To this door he went. He turned the knob; it offered no resistance, and he entered the splendid apartment.

By the window, over whose plate-glass panes heavy orange-satin curtains were let down, sat a lady, deeply engrossed in reading.

She smiled as she read, all unconscious of the presence frowning so grimly upon her; and when she smiled she seemed transfigured, so gloriously did her features lighten.

She was otherwise scarcely beautiful, though not plain. She had an oval face, and her hair was brushed gracefully off the white forehead. The cheeks wore a pale crimine tint; the lips were scarlet and haughty. Her dress was a white negligé, of fine, soft India muslin, and trimmed with cobweb laces.

Upon this fair tableau the intruder gazed, and the frown darkened on his brow. She did not heed it, and read on in blissful unconsciousness. He advanced rapidly, and laid his hand on the book.

"Clare!"

She started, as though frightened, but when she saw him, her fear turned to delight, and she sprung from her chair.

"Frederic, my darling!"

She laid her hands on his breast, but he removed them, and led her to the chair she had just vacated.

"You know I dislike such demonstrations. Please discontinue them in the future."

A pained expression came over her features, but she made no reply.

For several moments they stood confronting each other. Then he spoke:

"Doubtless you were surprised to see me so unexpectedly; but the old excuse is again offered."

Clare raised her eyes a moment, looking full in his face.

"Frederic, will the time never come when peace and love are restored between us? Must our lives ever be passed in this awful mockery, ever apart?"

She gazed tenderly upon his cold, handsome face, and a bitter smile broke over his features.

"Never! Your own hand did the deed; your own heart must bear the consequences."

He smiled proudly.

Clare uttered a cry of anguish.

"My heart alone, Frederic? Am I the only victim of this unhappy marriage? Does not your heart ever long for the happy days by-gone? Oh, my husband, must I bear this load alone? Pity me, pity me, and love me, be it ever so little!"

She raised those tender, tearful eyes, love-lit through the mists of grief, in earnest imploration.

"Do not enact this scene again, Clare. Whenever I come, the tableau is the same. Do you wonder I come not oftener?"

Frederic Trevlyn folded his arms as he stood before her.

"I received your letter last week, and I would have come before, had not other affairs detained me. Now I am here, ready to do your bidding, as a husband should do."

For a moment a sarcastic light gleamed in Clare Trevlyn's eyes, but she bowed respectfully.

"I will hear my husband's will."

A viad of scornful indignation was centered in the one word, and Frederic felt it, but too proud to resent it, he proceeded:

"I can tell you my commands in a few words. I never wish to see you at the Archery again."

An enraged blush mantled her face, and she turned proudly to him.

"You have no authority to order your wife, your lawfully-wedded wife, the mother of your child—dead and an angel though she be—from your door. You dare not, you shall not! I protest against it! At the Archery or in the Philadelphia mansion, I am mistress. Remember, my name is Mrs. Frederic Trevlyn, and no human power can divest me of my rights and privileges."

Frederic Trevlyn looked coolly on her, so glowing and animated.

"That is false," he said, quietly and calmly. "You wear my name, you are called my wife by the few who know us. You are truly mistress of your mansion

here, for I gave it to you. You were my wife once, Clare, my loved wife; you are my little dead daughter's mother. I never shall forget that; and for her sake it is that I tolerate you enough to hold an acquaintance with you. But beyond these claims, you are not my wife. You never shall be."

His language, though decided, was not harsh. His tones, though firm and stern, were not malignant, and Clare Trevlyn knew he meant every syllable he uttered.

Her cheek paled, and she trembled like an aspen.

"No, Frederic! Unsay those cruel words! Remember an early wedded life; remember how happy, how trusting you were then. You loved me then, my husband."

Like music, sung by the siren of the fatal rocks, her low, liquid voice came to his ear, and her beautiful, melting eyes gazed affectionately in his own.

Clare Trevlyn had charmed him once, but her time had passed.

"Never call me husband again, I command you!" he replied, almost fiercely, shaking her soft white hand from his arm.

His words stung her to madness, and she answered in her anger:

"And you, whom the world thinks an enviable man, whom mamma and daughters look covetously upon—you, whose wife is disgraced, dishonored—can enjoy your freedom, your pleasure; can visit beauteous ladies, and whisper love-words in their ears."

"Clare!"

Frederic Trevlyn fairly thundered the name. His face grew white with an ill-suppressed passion as he proceeded.

"How dare you mention this subject? Remember, never another word on this matter."

"You have not the power to silence me! I will speak, and inform you that my love, earnest though it was, can turn to hate! I can punish you, if I am what you declare you 'hate' and 'despise!'"

She paused to await his reply, but he sternly regarded her in contemptuous silence. She spoke again, now wooing and humble.

The man who had knocked entered the room.

In person he was a little, lithe fellow, with a heavy beard, black as night. He was not old—barely thirty. There was an expression of shrewd cunning upon his clearly-cut, olive-tinted features.

"Good-evening, neighbor Beppo," said the stranger, who was the man known as Giacomo Petrucca, the image-maker.

"Good-evening," responded Beppo. "By your leave, I will sit down," said Giacomo, helping himself to a chair. I have come upon important business to-night, Signor Beppo," he continued. You have a very lovely daughter—Bianca. I want a wife, and I have admired your daughter ever since I made her acquaintance a month ago. I come to ask you to give me your daughter for a wife.

Beyond a slight movement of the eyes, Beppo's impassive face showed no sign as to whether he was pleased or displeased with the frank speech of the young Italian, which was given in a somewhat insolent way.

"I feel honored by your offer, but I must decline," said Beppo, dryly.

"Decline!" cried Giacomo, an angry glitter in his eyes.

"Yes, decline," repeated Beppo.

"You had better not!" said Giacomo, with menace in his tones.

"Why not?" Beppo's face showed plainly his rising anger.

"Because you will repent it, and I'll tell you why," said Giacomo, with a look of triumph.

Beppo felt a sudden chill as if he had trodden on a snake. He cast a searching glance into the face of the young man.

"I'm going to tell you a little Roman story," said Giacomo, with a meaning look.

"Eighteen years ago in Rome there lived a dashing young nobleman, named Rafael Villani.

He fell in love with a young lady, named Bianca Orsini, and ran away with and married her, despite her relatives—the great Orsini family—who opposed the match.

The young couple had been married scarcely two months, when the Orsini family, through their powerful political connections, had the young husband, Count Villani, accused of treason and thrown into prison.

There he remained about a year, when he managed to escape. He fled to the country villa where he had left his wife.

During his imprisonment, his child—a daughter—was born. Folded in his wife's arms he was surprised by her brother, Count Orsini. A ball from the brother's pistol, intended for the husband, pierced the wife's heart.

Maddened by the blood of her loved, the husband drew his rapier, and after a short but desperate fight passed it through the lungs of the brother, wounding him mortally. Then the husband seized his child and fled. The Orsini family accused him of the murder of both the brother and the sister. A reward was set upon his head.

But, from that day to this, Rafael Villani has never been discovered. Now, after this little story, don't you think that you can change your mind and give me your daughter for a wife?"

"Why should I do so?" asked Beppo, whose countenance betrayed traces of strong emotion.

"Simply that the Roman Government, even at this late day, would probably rejoice to get their hands upon the murderer, for whose arrest a thousand gold crowns were offered, and that Beppo, the organ-grinder, is the fugitive Count Rafael Villani!"

"You can not prove it!" gasped Beppo.

"Yes I can," replied the Italian; "you have altered somewhat, but there are plenty in Italy to swear to your identity, once you are there. I will give you about twenty minutes to make up your mind. Meanwhile I'll wait for you in my room, below. In twenty minutes come to me, or I'll come to you, with the officers of justice at my back." And, with a smile of triumph, the Italian left the room.

Beppo groaned aloud in agony. He felt a light pressure upon his shoulder, and, looking up, he beheld Bianca standing at his side.

He surmised that the girl knew all.

"You have overheard?" he said.

"Yes," she replied, in a firm tone; "to save your life I will become this man's wife."

"Oh, it is a terrible sacrifice!" he cried, in anguish.

"Better than to have you perish on the scaffold, father," she said, gently.

"I have striven to hide myself—to disguise my identity—but the longing to live where I could hear the sound of my native language has given me into this man's power."

"Go, father, at once, and tell him that I consent."

With a heavy heart, Beppo departed on his errand. He descended to the floor below and knocked at the door of Giacomo's room.

A hoarse voice, that was strange to his ear, asked: "Who is there?"

"It is I, Beppo, the organ-grinder," the Italian answered.

For a moment there was silence; then the hoarse voice bade him enter.

Beppo entered the room and a strange sight met his eyes.

Four men were in the room, all in black masks, through which shone gleaming eyes. In one corner of the room was a black bundle, tied with cords, which to the fear-stricken eyes of Beppo bore a horrible resemblance to a human figure, but Giacomo was not to be seen.

"Welcome," said one of the masked figures, who was evidently the chief of the four. "You have come timely. We need a judge and you shall fill the office. You are an Italian, and love your country; therefore you can easily do justice."

"But, sire—" cried Beppo, in alarm.

"Do not speak, but listen," said the masked man. "One day, in an Italian city, some hundred brave hearts assembled together and bound themselves by fearful oaths to free their country from the rule of the tyrant. They took the oath of the Carbonari—of that secret society, that, springing from the charcoal-burners of the forest, has made the thrones of Europe quake with fear. One of these hundred men was a craven traitor. False to the oath that he swore, he betrayed his brothers, gave them to the scaffold and the ax. Their warm young blood reddens his hands. What should be his fate?"

"Death!" answered Beppo, firmly. He was a true Italian.

"Good!" cried the masked man, while a stifled groan came from the black bundle bound with cords. "Count Rafael Villani, you can return to Italy; the State at last has done you tardy justice and pardoned you. Here is your pardon," and the Mask gave Beppo the paper that was stamped with the broad Papal seal. "A knave was intrusted

with it to bear across the sea, and discover your abode. He concealed this knowledge from you and sought to marry your daughter, so as to inherit your estate now restored to you. A second time he played the traitor. But the strong arm of the Carbonari has struck him. Some of the hundred who were betrayed by this hound, escaped the slaughter, and found safety beneath the eagle's wing. The traitor was recognized, tracked, and now his fate is sealed. Go; and in Italy do not forget, if the time ever comes when you can help a patriot, whose only fault is love for his native land, that the Carbonari helped you in a far-off clime."

Beppo left the room.

The next morning, in his room, the dead body of Giacomo, the pretended image-maker, was found. But a single wound was on the body—a single stab through the heart.

Count Rafael Villani and his daughter Bianca returned to Italy, and again took possession of the estate that had so long been kept from them; and few of the American visitors in Rome who partake of the splendid hospitality of Count Rafael, would believe that their host had once been known in New York City as Beppo, the organ-grinder.

The Key of the Convent.

A SEQUEL TO THE LOVE TEST.

BY CAPTAIN MAYNE REID.

In the beautiful bay of Havana is anchored a craft, of apparently, about two hundred tons. Her clean clipper build, with the neat trim of her spars and rigging, bespeak the gentleman's yacht. Her sails, though stowed, show that when set they would be laced to both gaff and boom. This with certain other peculiarities of rig, proclaim her to be an American. English they would be attached only to the gaff. And still other, and slighter, idiosyncrasies, suggest that she is a New Yorker. She is.

Her white, polished decks, the brightly-burnished binnacle, and trimly-coiled cables, tell her owner to be a man of taste. This would be more than confirmed, on entering her cabin; where wealth and elegance seem to have struggled as to which should have the credit of its ornamentation.

"Pardon me, Henry. I didn't mean it universally—only in a general sense. You must acknowledge, yourself, there are not many women so constant as Ysabel Vallejo; perhaps not many who loved as she."

There are few, either men or women, who can resist flattery, if it come clothed in the semblance of truth; and as Henry Clinton's cheek returned to the support of the cushion, there was a flush upon it, that told of a relief to the bitterness of his spirit.

Still further to relieve him his counselor continued:

"For my part, I don't see why you should be in such despair. If Ysabel has taken the black veil, it doesn't follow that she should forever wear it. I'm not much acquainted with convent customs; but there may be ways of obtaining a divorce from this marriage, as they call it, of to-day."

"Jerome, you shock me!" cried Clinton, this time rising to his feet, "you shock and pain me. You know that I've been brought up in a strict observance of religion; and though not that of Rome, there are thoughts alike sacred to all creeds."

"You mistake me, Clinton. I had no intention in what I said either to shock or pain you. And though I may have clothed my thoughts in rather queer language—I admit having done so—it was because I wish to talk common-sense. Listen till I explain myself."

The owner of the yacht sunk back upon his couch, without saying a word, and in a way that signified his willingness to hear the explanation.

"Of course," continued his friend, "as I've told you, I know very little about nuns or nunneries, even less than yourself, and still less about those in Roman Catholic countries. If Ysabel Vallejo were immured in a New York convent—St. Vincent's or the Sacred Heart, for instance—and under like circumstances, there would be no great difficulty in getting her out, I should think—that is, now. In times to come it may not be so easy, if we Americans do not take strong steps against this new Jesuitism that, sent from Rome, and secretly supported by all the crowned heads of Europe, threatens to sap the pillars of our Republic. Excuse me, Clinton; I know you are not in a mood to talk politics; but frivolous as you may think me, I as an American, and I hope a loyal one, can not help giving expression to a thought suggested by present circumstances. To you there is a more important

trifled with thoughts more powerful than my own—affectations far truer. I have trampled upon the delicate chain that bound our two hearts together. Oh God! I may have severed its links, never again to be united."

"Romantic talk, Clinton! No, you, nor any other man, can sever the links of that chain. Nor can any power upon earth destroy it. If I'm to judge by my experience, the more you tread upon, the stronger it becomes. The very fact of Ysabel Vallejo having forsaken the world, and its pleasures—such pleasures, too—solely because she could not enjoy them with you, should not this satisfy you? Come, Clinton! it's no use talking high sentiment any longer. Let us descend to the common-sense of every-day life. You want your sweetheart out of the conventual clutch. No doubt it would be easy enough, if she were only a poor girl, with no expectations. But these cunning disciples of Loyola look to Madame Vallejo, who, although an American, appears to have become one of their most devoted adherents. Last time I saw her she talked crazy on the subject, trying to convert me—me! They are looking to her last will and testament, by which they hope to wheedle her out of her great wealth; for this is the grand secret of their growth and strength. It is the only thing to fear. But half a million of dollars, adroitly spent, may thwart their design, and not only bring her daughter back to the world, but save the senora herself from being plundered."

"Dear, dear friend! You speak words of comfort."

"And I shall do a deed to comfort you, Harry. I have already done one that has given you much misery. True it was against my own will, and counsel too. No use talking of it now. I must try to repair the loss, by showing like energy in contributing to your happiness. In this I think I shall succeed; but, as I've told you, Clinton, it is a question of expense."

"Expense! Jerome, don't talk of that. Take this check-book on the Bank of Havana. It gives me credit for a million of dollars. I endorse you as drawer. If this be not enough, I can contrive to double the amount—say, treble it, to exchange one word with Ysabel Vallejo!"

As Clinton spoke, he plucked a pen from his inkstand, and wrote on the check-book the transference of his authority to the name, "JEROME VAN VLIET."

They had stopped in front of a handsome mansion, standing a little retired from the street, and shaded with tropical shrubbery—through which could be seen a grand doorway, with the door close shut.

"The casa Vallejo," said the guide, pointing to it. "Do you dismiss me here, senor? Or shall I wait till you come out? You may wish to see other sights of our beautiful city?"

"Wait!" said the stranger, as he turned into the shelled walk that led toward the ponderous puerta.

A house of Spanio-Moriscan architecture, with its inclosed court-yard (patio) shut in by a long gallery and gate from all outward intrusion, with the light of a Southern sky falling from above, and playing with a fountain jet whose spray is flung over the leaves of the lime, and other tropical evergreens.

In the open veranda, running half round this cool court, a lady is seated. She is but little beyond mid age, though looking older from the somber shade of her dress, and the traces of some recent bereavement strongly stamped upon her countenance. It is the Senora Vallejo, who has, that day, in the convent of Santa Catalina, beheld her only daughter dedicated to Christ—evermore to be apart from herself.

It would be strange if she were not sad; and she is.

Standing in the gallery beside her, is one who seems to be administering comfort: a man dressed in full sacerdotal robes, of the costume of a secular clergy—in short, a Roman Catholic priest. Holding in his hand a long shovel-shaped hat, he is bending in front of her with an air half-humble, half-authoritative.

"You have given her to God," he said. "And what greater privilege could there be in this world. In the next, senora, you will have your reward, and share it with your daughter. Do not grieve, then, or repent of what you have done. That would be sinful."

"I do not repent, father; but how can I restrain myself from sorrow, when I think of my dear Ysabel, gone from me forever?"

"Gone from you forever! No! not forever. Only for a brief space of time, to be afterward your companion through all eternity."

Simultaneous with the word "eternity" came a knock at the street door; which caused both senora and priest to start—the latter looking somewhat chagrined at being thus disturbed. In that hour, when the mother's heart was weakened with grief, he was designing to strengthen the fulcrum of that spiritual lever, by which she might afterward be easily managed.

"A gentleman—a stranger!" announced the puerta-cochera.

"Your mistress can not see him," said the priest, turning brusquely toward the servant.

"He says he is an old friend of the senora—from Los Estados Unidos."

"Ah! Perhaps from New York!" exclaimed the lady, rising to her feet; and in the memory of her free native land, showing a determination to act independently of the will of the ecclesiastic.

"Si, senora," rejoined the domestic. "Nueva-York, he said."

"I must see him, father; I have friends there who are still dear to me. Show him in, Jose!"

The padre, with a displeased expression upon his cadaverous countenance, retired to an inner room; while the senora remained on the veranda, waiting the announced visitor.

She was already pale; but became paler on perceiving who it was—starting as if a spirit had suddenly appeared before her.

"You, Mr. Van Vliet! It is so long since I have seen you! It is as if you came from the other world!"

"I have come, senora, from one who might better answer your description."

"From whom, Mr. Van Vliet? What mean you?"

"Only, Madame Vallejo, that he who was to have been your son-in-law—Henry Clinton—is still in this world—he still lives!"

The lady, who had risen from her chair to receive her visitor, stood gazing upon him with a look of wild incredulity.

"Is this true?" she cried, gasping out the words. "Jerome Van Vliet, are you mocking me?"

"No, senora," he said, "I am not. I have come, and I have seen him, and I have spoken with him. He is well, and he is happy. He is still in this world—he still lives!"

"You have seen him, and you have spoken with him? Where is he? How is he? Tell me, tell me, tell me!"

"He is in New York, senora. He is in the city of the great future. He is in the city of the great hope. He is in the city of the great love. He is in the city of the great life. He is in the city of the great death. He is in the city of the great resurrection. He is in the city of the great glory. He is in the city of the great triumph. He is in the city of the great victory. He is in the city of the great conquest. He is in the city of the great empire. He is in the city of the great kingdom. He is in the city of the great dominion. He is in the city of the great power. He is in the city of the great might. He is in the city of the great strength. He is in the city of the great courage. He is in the city of the great valor. He is in the city of the great heroism. He is in the city of the great nobility. He is in the city of the great magnanimity. He is in the city of the great generosity. He is in the city of the great kindness. He is in the city of the great goodness. 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"No mockery, madame. The story of Henry Clinton's death proves to have been a mistake—a mere *canard*, such as often makes its way into the newspapers—French as well as American. I know that my friend is still alive. I have seen him within the hour."

"He is here then?"

"He is."

"Oh! my daughter—my poor Ysabel!"

"What of her? I hope no misfortune has happened. She still lives?"

"No, no! she is dead! She has become the inmate of a convent. She has this day been dedicated!"

"Senora! it is sinful of you to speak thus," interposed the priest, gliding out from the shadowy chamber where he had ensconced himself to listen. "Our Holy Church is scandalized by such talk. In the discharge of my duty I can not stay here and listen to it."

"Does any one hinder you from withdrawing?" inquired Van Vliet, returning the scowl with which the ecclesiastic regarded him.

"Oh Mr. Van Vliet!" cried the senora, seeming all at once overcome with fear. "Do not speak thus to the worthy cura of St. Ignacio. He is my confessor."

"Cacallero!" said the priest, in a tone of insolent authority, "you appear to be intruding upon this gentle lady. And as it is a question of our Holy Faith, I must insist on your withdrawing."

Van Vliet looked astounded; then toward Madame Vallejo, once his acquaintance, though never upon terms of intimacy. Was he to go or stay? He could see no sign to direct him.

As if under some fear, or fascination, the features of the lady remained perfectly immobile. But this was enough to determine him; and, bowing himself out of her presence, he disappeared down the shadowy *saguan*, leaving the weak woman in the hands of her spiritual adviser.

On the street he rejoined Cristoforo Culares; and before parting with the guide he gave him good reasons for meeting him again.

Reader, has it ever been your opportunity to peep into the cloister cell of a convent? I fancy not. It is a privilege accorded to but few men—even those wearing the sacerdotal robe on their shoulders.

And yet it has been mine—scores of times—for reasons it is not necessary to tell you of. But I may describe to you one of those quaint little chambers, shut in between massive walls; not even ornamented with paper, but plainly plastered, scarce eight feet square, with a little white counterpane on the floor, on which sleeps virginity itself; here and there a niche containing the statue of saint, or crucified Savior; a single chair; a miniature table, on which lies the bit of unfinished embroidery, intended for the decoration of some monastic vestment; all lit up by a little window, admitting only a subdued light, and more resembling the embrasure intended for a piece of ordnance.

Within such a convent chamber, and in just such a light, a nun is seated. She is young, and despite the sad expression upon her face, exquisitely beautiful. There is a slight tinge of red upon her cheeks, relieving their general pallor. It is the same she wore before the altar, where on that morning she has been made a bride. It is like the last roseate touch of the sun, lingering on the summit of some snow-crowned mountain, when gone leaving all cold behind it; for it was a bridal in which her heart had no happiness. It only recalled the thoughts of another bridal more consonant with her inclinations, that might have taken place about that very time, but for the cruel chance that despoiled her of him who should have been the bridegroom.

As Sister Dolores—for such was now the name of Ysabel Vallejo—sat in her silent cloister—for the time forsaken by the novitiates who had acted as her tiremaids—who could blame her for reflecting on the past, happy as sad—who chide her for thinking of that great gay city of the North? There the whole sunlight of her life seemed to concentrate in a flood of soft, ethereal light—the light of her only love!

She did think of it; and then, as if awed at thus permitting mortal thoughts to intrude upon the pure spiritual existence to which she had that day vowed devotion, she sunk repentant upon her knees, and poured forth her soul in prayer.

As she rose to her feet and stood erect in her little chamber, she felt resigned to her new life. Nothing now remained but to devote herself to its tranquil duties. Such was the reflection that passed through her mind.

How little know we what is before us! Little thought Sister Dolores, as she rose from her attitude of prayer, that in five minutes afterward a passion would be rekindled within her breast, making the walls of that sacred cloister hideous in her sight, as though they were the surroundings of a convict cell!

She fancied she was dreaming, as a piece of white paper, folded in the form of a note, came swishing through the window, and fell at her feet on the floor.

It seemed but the continuance of a dream as she mechanically took it up, and, unfolding it, read what was written inside.

"Ysabel! You believe me dead. Would that it were so! After what I have this day seen—for I was present at the closing scene of the ceremony—death has now no terrors for me. Nay, it would be but a relief; and I shall seek that end by whatever moral

means it can be soonest achieved. I pray that we may meet in another world; but, before leaving this, I ask of you one word—a sign—to say that you still love me, as I you. I know how I have sinned, in leaving you as I did; but, oh, Ysabel! if you know how I have suffered, you could not but forgive me. And you will not deny me this last asking. It is no sin for you to grant it, since the love between us had no antagonism with that now bestowed upon your Savior. No, Ysabel! Whatever your spiritual advisers may tell you, the two are compatible; for our love was pure as that of the angels. Speak, then, loved and lost one—speak without fear! Be silent, and I go to my grave with the darkest sorrow that ever sat upon a broken heart."

"HENRY CLINTON."

Long before the new-made nun had finished the reading of this strange epistle, her trembling limbs refused to sustain her, and she sunk upon the side of her couch.

As she reached the conclusion, and the well-remembered autograph came under her eyes, the note fell from her hands, both becoming clasped over her breast, as if to prevent her heart from bursting forth!

For some time she sat thus, her heart's quick, heavy throbbings being the only sounds heard within the cloister. And after these had ceased to stay her breath, she repeated, in low, murmured words:

"Mother of God! He is still alive! And still loves me!"

Who could blame her for once more taking into her hands the precious sheet, once more reading what was written upon it, and then placing her lips in contact with the name sursigned? Not even the Virgin herself, who seemed out of her niche to look approvingly upon the act!

For the third time going over the glad words, as if to fix them forever in her memory, she saw something that caused her to start—giving her hope of still further gratification. It was one little word, traced at the corner of the page, and in pencil: "over."

She understood its significance, and quickly turned the leaf.

On the other side, written also in pencil, she read:

"SENORITA VALLEJO! You will remember me as the friend of Henry Clinton. I am his bosom friend, and he has entrusted me with the delivery of this note. He who places it in your hands will be near to bring back an answer. If you but knew how he suffers who sent it, you would, I know, make that answer soothing. I am myself only what is called a man of the world. Still am I capable of sincere friendships. One of these embraces Henry Clinton and yourself. Armed with good intentions toward both, I approach you with a counsel, that I hope you will not hastily reject. You have been shut up in a convent, if not against your will, certainly by a mistake in the intention. It is not yet too late to rectify it; and if you do not, you will have the life of Henry Clinton to answer for. He cares not to live without you, for without you life to him would be worse than death. With you his happiness on earth would be complete. And say, would not also yours? For both your sakes, I have contrived a plan for your escape from this prison. From the vow you have taken it is still easier. It was made under a misconception; and God, if not man, will surely absolve you. Fear not, then, to follow my advice. Consent to save the life of your lover, and my friend. Say but the word, and the way will be made open and easy. He who writes to you holds in his hand the key of this convent."

"JEROME VAN VLIET."

Never in her life was there so wild a struggle in the breast of Ysabel Vallejo. It was a strife between two loves having little affinity with each other—the love of God, and the love of man!

Had they been antagonistic, the former might have triumphed. They were not; and the latter gained ascendancy.

With trembling fingers, the new-made nun tore off the leaf written in pencil, and with a pencil of her own wrote on the only white space left:

"I consent!"

She stepped forward, and looked out through the little window. There was a man sauntering outside, whom she recognized as the gate-keeper of the convent. His eyes, glancing furtively toward her cloister, told why he was there, plain as words could have spoken it.

The twisted scrap fell upon the flags at his feet. She who tossed it through the bars did not wait to see whether he had taken it up. As he did so, she was upon her knees before the image of the Madonna, her heart full of conflicting emotions—a feeling of guilt and fear struggling against one of penitence and prayer!

Though the convent of Santa Catalina fronts on the public street, it has another entrance at the back, opening upon a wide space, embowered under a thick canopy of the most beautiful trees known to the vegetation of the tropics. It is the convent garden—the only spot upon earth where the fair recluses are permitted to gaze upon the bright, world of Nature—separated from that of busy life by a high wall running along the rear. Through this wall is a wicket leading into the quiet back street, with a strong, iron-clasped door, rarely seen open.

It was opened on the night of that day, on which Ysabel Vallejo assumed the black veil. So quietly and stealthily, however, that only three individuals saw it turn upon its hinges. One of these was seated upon the box of a carriage drawn up under the shadow of the street trees. Any one near enough to penetrate the obscurity that shrouded him might have seen that he was not a regular cocher, but the guide, Cristoforo Culares.

The other two, who had unlocked the wicket, with what must have been their own

key, were Henry Clinton and his friend, Jerome Van Vliet—though both were wrapped in cloaks, Havana fashion, and otherwise habited as *Havaneros*. They had just stepped out of the carriage, left in charge of the comisario.

It wants still some minutes of midnight; and once inside the garden they close the door silently behind them. Keeping within the shadow of the shrubbery they approach the back of the building, with as much stealth as if they were bent upon an errand of crime. They take no heed of the sweet strain of the mock-bird poured forth from the top of the royal palm; though it helps to conceal the noise of their own footsteps. They chafe at the clear tropic moonlight, while it guides them to the place they are seeking to reach.

This is the *escalera*—a stone stairway which continues the long corridor of the convent down into the garden.

They discover it at length; and take stand by the bottom step—still keeping under shadow, with eyes fixed upon the massive door at the stair-head. It is closed; looks dark and forbidding; but they have hopes to see it open, else they would not have been there. They seem to be awaiting a signal.

It is at length given by the heavy convent bell beginning to toll the hour of twelve.

Its first knell has silenced the song of the nightingale; but almost at the same instant their ears are saluted by a sound more welcome, if less melodious. It is a slight grating, heard as the heavy door is drawn inward on its hinges; and, then, presenting itself in the moonlight appears a face, encreased in black erupe, but white, soft, and beautiful as might be the daughter of Luna herself.

Henry Clinton, recognizing the face of his beloved Ysabel, can scarce restrain himself from rushing up the steps and flinging his arms around her. He is held back by Van Vliet, who perceives the danger of such a rash act; and they wait for her to descend.

She glides down silently, but without fear. Nor is she terrified, when on reaching the last step, a cloaked form comes out from the shadow of the trees, with arms stretched forward to receive her.

She does not shun the embrace; for she knows they are the arms of her one and only lover.

But a whisper is exchanged between them—only the words "Henry—Ysabel."

In another instant his clasp is around her, and he raises her from the ground with the strength of a tiger, but tenderly kissing as he carries her away.

The wicket is cleared and reclosed by the thoughtful Van Vliet; for a few seconds the wheels of a carriage are heard rattling along the street; the huge clock-bell has ceased its lugubrious tolling; and the mock-bird is once more filling the convent garden with his sweet mimic song.

A boat is crossing the harbor of Havana toward a yacht anchored far out. It is about an hour after midnight; but before the morning light has succeeded that of the moon, the yacht silently takes up its anchor. Then, with all sail set, it sweeps past the frowning walls of El Moro, and is seen standing toward the shores of a land, where no convent walls may keep Ysabel Vallejo from the joys of the world, nor it from beholding her beauty.

The Lover's Sacrifice.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

"AND here we are at last, John," panted little Harry Evans, as he wiped the perspiration from his glowing, babyish-looking face.

The two young gentlemen had just passed through the crowd that blocked up the passage in front of the Horton mansion, a slight accident having occurred to one of the carriages being the principal cause of the gathering; the screams of the terrified lady bringing out the guests who had already arrived.

Then John Stephens and his friend entered the ball-room. The *salon* was large, and only comfortably filled, for a "jam" was ever avoided by Mrs. Horton. Our two friends were late, and were detained for a while from paying their respects to the hostess. After an exchange of compliments:

"Come, Mr. Stephens, I have a treat for you and Harry, here. I wish to give you an introduction to Miss Monroe, who is visiting me. It is her first appearance since her father's death, poor thing, and I could scarcely prevail upon her to come down," and Mrs. Horton paused in front of two ladies, one of them being her daughter, with whom both the gentlemen were well acquainted.

The introduction over, Harry immediately engaged Miss Monroe in a lively conversation, leaving Stephens to entertain Miss Horton. While talking with her, he had an opportunity of noting the lady in whose praise Evans had been so enthusiastic; and this is what he saw.

A light, graceful form, robed in a fleecy dress of deep crimson. A face, irregular, if the features were considered separately; but combined, the result was a strangely fascinating picture; one that the gaze would return to, even in the presence of more classic beauty. Large, lustrous eyes, black as a shoe; hair of a brilliant glossy

blackness, worn rather short, curling and clustering around the sunny temples and neck, unconfined, save by a broad black velvet band, clasped in front with a glowing ruby gem. She was rather under medium size, but it rendered the picture perfect, at least in Stephens' estimation, who thought he had never met a more lovely, piquantly so, woman than Agatha Monroe.

His companion rallied him upon his evident infatuation, and with an effort he broke the spell that had crept over him, and claimed her hand for the *lancers* then forming. But during the dance his eyes would wander over to the window where sat Miss Monroe and his friend. She, too, had particularly noted the tall, handsome form, so soberly but elegantly dressed. Her eyes followed the stately figure, as her ears listened to the praises of him, given by Harry—who deemed John almost a demigod—and was looking at him earnestly, when their gaze met. What was it that caused both faces to flush and their eyes to turn away? But so it was.

When John Stephens went home that night he left his heart behind him in the keeping of, as he termed her, "the angel in red." Never until now had he met a woman that he could love; love with all his ardent, fiery nature. But now he loved, where he had scarcely spoken a dozen words.

He called the next day, and was introduced to Captain Howard Bayne, an English officer. John did not reason why, but he felt that he almost hated the handsome, polite Englishman, when the interview was over; and he left the house with a far heavier heart than when he entered it. There was a gentle kind of looking up to, and reliance upon the officer's opinion in Agatha's manner; while he treated her as though he had a claim upon her that allowed him the privilege. John tried to convince himself that there was something vulgar in the Englishman's manner, but without success, and he was forced to admit that Howard Bayne was a gentleman.

Spring had come at length, and, soon as the weather would permit, a series of picnics were planned under the supervision of the "incomparable Horton," as that lady was termed. About a dozen couple were selected for the first, and the day broke clear and warm. The spot selected was a romantic one by the side of the Moreau, where a pleasant little valley was nestled among the tall rock-crowned hills.

We will not describe the picnic; it has been too often and well told for that; we have only to do with Agatha and John. They wander over the hill and down into a valley, a counterpart of the one they had just left. Agatha was plucking flowers, but John walked on in silence, a cloud upon his face. They paused upon the river-bank. The opposite shore was steep and precipitous, and the one they were upon the same, except one slender point of sand that sloped down to the water. At its further extremity a dingy skiff was lying. Far below them they could hear the faint roar of the falls, where the water plunged in one unbroken sheet down upon the jagged rocks that churned the water into a cloud of spray and mist.

John stood for a minute by her side in silence; then, stooping, he took her hand and said:

"Agatha, let us sit down here. I have something to tell you."

Then his love found utterance in words; words so burning, thrilling, and so eloquent that Agatha cowered under them; her face pale, and a sad, wistful look in her eyes. At length he paused, and begged her answer.

"John, I did not know this was coming, or I should have stopped it at any cost. I thought you only loved me as a sister, for I heard you tell aunt so. I pity you, but I can not be your wife. Perhaps had—but, no, it is idle to think of what might have been!" she murmured, without looking at the bowed form that sat at her feet.

"John, my friend, let me tell you a little story."

"There was once an old silvery-haired man, who had one child, a daughter. He was an invalid, and his only joy was in this girl. He educated her himself, and the bond of love was strong and deep between them. After a time the father's illness increased, and he was lying very low, when his nephew came, the child of his dearest sister. The nephew stayed at the hall, and as he was kind and noble-hearted, it is a wonder that he made a deep impression upon the simple maiden's heart? A change came at length, and the father knew that he must die. He called his child and nephew to his bedside, and asked if they loved one another. 'With all my heart!' replied the man; the girl did not answer. She could not, for weeping; then he said:

"Howard, as you deal with her, may God deal with you. Be kind to her; she knows not the meaning of a harsh word. My child, he will be your only protector when I am gone. Promise me you will marry him."

"John, what could I say? I loved my father, God alone knows how tenderly, and it seemed as though he was speaking from the grave. So I promised, and now Howard Bayne is my affianced husband."

A low groan was the only response, as the powerful form trembled and quivered as it lay upon the ground. Then he raised his head and spoke.

"Agatha, I thank you. Will you await me here a little while? I must be alone."

before I can meet that gay, happy crowd, yonder," and he strode away.

She watched him until his form disappeared among the forest trees. Then she walked down the little sandy strip, entering the skiff and sat down. It was worn, eaten, the cracks wide and numerous, but she saw not them. Her feet rested upon a block of wood that lay in the bottom. A low cry broke from her lips as she bowed her head upon her knees. She did not know that the boat was slowly slipping from the sand-bar into deeper water. Her sobs drowned the little gurgle of water as it poured through the cracks and seams. She did not feel the motion as the boat slid from shore and began to float down-stream. The water, cold and death-like, slowly crept up the sides of the treacherous skiff, until it touched her feet. She revived with a start, and as the boat now rushed into the swift current, she realized her peril and shrieked aloud, in her terror:

"Oh, John, John, help! Save me!"

She is heard, and a tall form dashes madly down the bank and bounds far out into the stream, and then reaches the fast-sinking boat. He climbs in at the stern, and grasping the paddle, drops his hat into Agatha's lap. She understands the motion and begins bailing out the water. He dips the paddle deep and strongly, and heads the boat toward the landing. Well, he knows that there is not one spot but that, where a human person could get in shore; but the current is strong and very swift. Great beads of sweat stand upon his brow, and the muscles of his arm nearly burst the coat-sleeve. A cry from Agatha startles him, and he looks, only to see a stream of water, thick as his arm, spouting into the boat. He knows that all is in vain, then, and tears off his coat, vest and boots; then he straps his suspenders tightly about his waist. The boat gives one hoarse gurgle, then a sullen plunge, and it has gone forever!

John grasps Agatha with one hand while the other places the paddle in her hand, then, with the other end grasped between his teeth, he strikes out for shore. The current is less swift there, and their fate would be delayed. Only delayed; for he well knew that a cat could scarcely scale the bank, that was unbroken to the falls. The water, too, was very deep at its foot, far beyond human reach. But there was one chance, and John knew that if his strength did not fail, that one life might be preserved.

He glanced back at Agatha, drawing her toward him by the paddle and securely knotting one end of her light shawl around her waist. Then they floated on until the point was reached, only a few hundred yards from the fall. The water set around this point with great power, throwing its main force toward the other shore. It was a terrible struggle, but then he gained the shrub that overhung the water, and to it tied the loose end of the shawl. He did not speak, but pressed a kiss upon her pallid lips and then floated away. The bush would not support them both.

"John, what do you mean? The bush will support two! Come back, John, or let me die with you! John, I love you! I love you!" she shrieked, as she beheld the form of her preserver floating onward to certain death.

She watched him with eager, longing eyes; she saw him raise his clasped hands, heard the words:

"God bless and save you, Agatha!" faintly came to her ears above the din of the cataract, and then he disappeared from her sight forever! She gave one low wail and swooned.

Agatha knew no more for weeks, until she awoke from the brain fever that had set in. They had found and rescued her after a long search; but the body of John Stephens was never recovered. Agatha told Howard Bayne all, and he offered to release her from her promise, but she knew how dearly he loved her, and they were married.

She respects her husband, but there is a niche in her heart, a place in her memory that he can never fill; that contains the form of the noble, true-hearted man who gave his life to preserve hers.

Cruiser Crusoe!

OR,

LIFE ON A TROPIC ISLE.

BY LAFAYETTE LAFOREST.

NUMBER FOURTEEN.

THE concussion would have knocked me off my bough, had not my back been to the trunk, while my feet were firmly implanted on another branch.

With eager haste I looked down. The wretched cannibal, who had been appointed to the office of executioner, lay flat on his face, while not one of the others had moved. They were still seated in a circle as if changed to stone. They appeared momentarily in expectation of being punished in the same way. Then one looked at the other eagerly, and each seeing that no harm had occurred, began to examine their own persons. As soon as they became persuaded that only the intended murderer had perished, a conversation, in a low, hushed voice, ensued.

During this time the girl had roused herself, and I became aware that she had some faint suspicion of the truth. A quick mo-

tion of her head in my direction made me suspect this. But I kept as still as death, except that I cautiously and noiselessly loaded my gun. Then, to my amazement, the Fan Indians rose to their feet in a slow, quiet, humble way, and with many an obeisance and bow, approached the girl. They halted several times, singing in a chanting and monotonous way, some deprecating song, and casting fearful glances at the motionless dead body, for this man had died without a struggle. Then one or two of the number advanced and loosened the young girl, who appeared to take this treatment as a matter of course.

These savages have a great belief in witches and sorcerers, as a kind of medicine-men. They have no mercy upon the former, and whenever an apparently healthy person dies, are sure to search out the evil-doers. The doctor, or sorcerer, is generally selected to nominate the guilty, which he no sooner does than the whole tribe is rapt in an indescribable fury and horrid thirst for human blood. No sooner are the wretched women, generally young and pretty ones, pointed out, than they are dragged down to a river, placed in a canoe, hacked to pieces, and cast into the river.

But not so the sorcerer. He is looked up to, feared and respected. No doubt, despite the fact that in this case it was a woman, the marvelous display of power on the part of one so young and fair, had gone far to convince the ignorant and savage cannibals that they were in the power of a Great Medicine.

They led her into the midst, quite free now from all shackles, their air being one of singular admiration and awe. She stood, evidently half-amused and half-frightened, but quite anxious I am sure to escape their clutches. But this was out of the question, as they were evidently resolved to treat her now with as much deference and respect as hitherto they had been cruel.

For myself nothing had been gained, but on the other hand, her dear life was safe, and that was worth any thing else. After awhile, not one having dared to touch or raise the body, they seemed to take counsel of her, but she shook her head and turned away with disgust. Had the wretches proposed to eat her? I did not know.

The savages, who were quite humbled now, bowed their assent, and when she made signs that they should return to the camp, readily obeyed. But they now walked slowly and gravely, with measured step, allowing her precedence, which she accepted in a very pretty and taking way. As soon as it was safe, I slid from the tree, and though the wear and tear of the last three days had nearly exhausted my physical energies, made after them again.

They were now evidently thoughtful. These twenty warriors had seen the effect and heard the report of my gun—but how were they to explain the matter to their fellows? Probably they were familiar enough with words that expressed such meanings as thunder, lightning and thunderbolts, but what credit could they expect to obtain from those to whom they asserted that such was the agency, which had been miraculously employed to save her?

Besides, there were the deaths of two warriors to account for, and should any of the party have seen me, their suspicions would be aroused, and my supernatural character would not stand the least examination. Savages may be duped to a certain extent, but their natural cunning and intelligence soon comes to their assistance. My appearance and costume must soon have opened their eyes. I had heard that the savages, behind whom I kept at a safe and cautious distance, came within sight of their camp, and up rose the whole of the rest of the party to meet them. They were struck dumb with mingled astonishment and rage, when they saw the girl walking freely in the midst of the others, and some even poised their spears and felt for their arrows, preparatory to executing summary vengeance on the runaway. But the returning warriors gravely interfered, and began an explanation of what had happened.

Young and old, warriors and chiefs, had been crowding round, the girl with terrible and menacing looks when the narrative began. One of the warriors spoke energetically and loudly. Some of the listeners shook their heads with an incredulous smile, and I could see that two parties were forming, one in favor of the girl, the other against her, in which case the matter would finally be settled by an appeal to arms.

I again, in my impetuous way, had forced myself up as near the camp as I dared, screening myself behind bushes. The Indians had their backs turned to me. On a bough of a tree above where she stood, sat an old vulture watching the scene. Evidently the savages had been feasting, and this unclean beast was waiting to clear up the offal and other remains of their meal.

Keeping my eyes steadily for a moment on the whole group, and taking exactly the right opportunity, I fired, and shot the bird, which fell at the feet of the young girl. The whole terrified and affrighted group at once fell upon their knees, and the triumph of the girl was complete.

The savages, however, were not blind to their own interests, nor were they inclined to part with one whose power was so great. Little did I imagine the use they would require her to put it to. After some hasty refreshments of meat and what I afterward found to be palm wine, the whole body started in an easterly direction. It was

clear that she made a faint resistance. But this they would not listen to, for though their awe still continued, it did not make them any the less taskmasters or tyrants.

Again the greater part of them availed themselves of certain logs of wood, of a nature peculiarly fitted for canoe-building, to make their way up the river. It was clear that this was done for the sake of the wood itself partly, and then to avoid the jungle and forests on its banks. I was compelled to keep them in sight, to use my utmost vigilance, especially while the banks were composed of the usual mangrove swamps. Then the bank became higher and clearer, until it spread out into a kind of lake with very low marshy banks and no wood. As far as the eye could reach, the country was composed of vast fields of reeds, and other water weeds, while there was scarcely any current, and the water was turbid and unpleasant to the smell.

Here the savages halted so suddenly, that I had scarcely time to bob down into the water and conceal myself behind a log, to escape detection.

It was now night. The fire-fly began to sparkle in the gloom, the mosquito to buzz and bite, and the thousand and one mysterious noises of the shore and water to rise on all sides. There was a faint crepuscular light, such as in the tropics is apt immediately to succeed day, during which the landscape assumes an aspect of most enchanting but somewhat cold beauty. The gray, hard, granite sky, the turbid water, the waving reeds, and here and there a stunted tree, made up a landscape of wild and mysterious beauty.

The negroes, who probably were acquainted with this river, selected a narrow slip of land, not above a foot out of the water, for their camp, and proceeded to erect some sort of hut for the girl, whom I could see walking about and casting her eyes into the gloom. She was doubtless looking for me, and hoping yet that I might save her from a degrading slavery, which would probably end in her being sent to a barracoon and transferred to the Western Plantations.

Now, my wish was nothing more than to aid in her escape, but how it was to be brought about, it was more difficult than ever to say. The Fans were fully aware that she would escape if she could, so kept a strict watch over her. She appeared to me like some queens and kings of savage nations, which are petted up and kept in splendid palaces, but never allowed to come forth in the light of day or see the blessed sun.

Communicate with her I could not, without showing myself to the savages. At least, such was my fear and dread at the moment. Where I had halted in my mad pursuit of the poor girl, I was about up to my middle in thick, muddy water, while a log that had floated and then become fixed, formed a breastwork.

The log, or snag, as such impediments to navigation are technically called, was indeed a miserable place to pass a night on. But there was no help for it. On every side but that on which the negroes had pitched their tents, I could see nothing but reeds and water—the abode, to a certainty, of crocodiles, of which animals I had a most abhorrent aversion.

Crawling on to the log, which, in its highest part, was not a foot out of the water, I lay at full length, hiding my gun, lest a flash of the coming moonbeams might betray me. In this position, as my eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, I could see the negroes were busy at some preparation, but for some time I could not tell what it meant. Then some men began wading into the water in my direction, with great harpoons in their hands, and I knew that they were going to harpoon the crocodiles, the flesh of which all these coarse and powerful races most admire. My heart beat wildly. I was not more than thirty yards from the sandbank on which they were encamped, so that, did they make a move close to my log, I must be discovered.

I had two pistols and my gun, so determined, if it came to a tussle, to make a dash for the bank, firing right and left, and thus inducing the savages to flee, while I gained possession of the Indian girl. The savages moved slowly, some with lances, others with harpoons. Then came a whizzing sound, and a prodigious fellow began kicking and plunging to gain deep water, where he would have been inevitably lost.

But the negroes were too much for him, and after a few final kicks it was drawn ashore, dead. A loud shout proclaimed their success, after which, in a very few minutes, a bright blaze, ascending to the heavens, indicated that they were about to have a feast. Never, anywhere, on land or sea, had I witnessed a more picturesque grouping than that of those black savages in the midst of that watery plain.

The moment the fire blazed up, all the surrounding landscape fell into a darkness that resembled ebony, except that, I, at a distance from the fire, could see glimpses of light on the edge of the horizon, as if the moon were sending forth harbingers of its arrival. Then, for a space of some twenty yards or so, the atmosphere glowed with a ruddy and lurid glare, just as the smoke and flame got the mastery. By the warm and not unwelcome blaze—fire is always a companion—the figures of the half-naked savages looked gigantic, while she, who only occasionally appeared, looked a form of fairy-like proportions alongside their huge painted bodies.

Presently several of the savages started up. I was very nearly doing the same, for close to me I heard a snorting and splashing. My good genius, however, enabled me to lie still, for I at once knew that I was in the very midst of a herd of hippopotami, having before heard their snort-like roars breaking the still night air. I peered round and found that they were to windward of me, standing on the shallows, and looking like so many old weather-beaten logs, stranded on a sandbar. Very little more could be seen save their ugly noses. I lay myself with a clutched and cocked pistol in my hand, for the savages were up, and evidently prepared for sport, though it was almost impossible for them ever to catch these animals, even in pitfalls.

It is a most clumsily-built, unwieldy animal, remarkable chiefly for its enormous head, and disproportionately short legs. Its feet are constructed so as to facilitate their walking among the reeds and mud, as well as for swimming. The hoof is divided into four short, apparently clumsy and unconnected toes, by means of which they walk rapidly, even on mud. They have huge, crooked tusks, with which to hook up the long river grasses. They go in droves in places where their bodies are submerged, and yet they can touch the ground. Their food is entirely vegetable.

Presently the negroes came down to the water's edge, just as a sudden groan was heard close to me, and peering into the half-light, I saw, dimly, a huge animal, looking doubly monstrous in the uncertain light. Some fifty negroes now advanced, brandishing their spears, and when they were close enough, actually throwing them at the beast, which, except that it annoyed him, felt no more than I should the prick of a pin.

But he was irritated, and, suddenly putting out his great speed, he flew at the negroes in a savage and angry way, which boded no good. With loud and hideous yells, the savages fled, for they knew the danger; this animal, when savage, often killing his persecutors. His bulk causes neither rocks, nor bushes, nor swamps, to be any impediment to him, so that, in this case, he went direct at the island.

Then I saw her stand alone, after every negro had disappeared, hiding in the water, or lying down, or skulking somewhere in front of the fire, right in the brute's way. My hand shook convulsively, as I caught up my gun, leaped into the water, took aim at the ear of the huge brute, and fired. With a hoarse groan, or rather, grunt, it stood still, and then fell down dead.

I stooped low, but still in a position to see all. She had not moved. There she was, with clasped hands and upraised eyes, perfectly certain—it must be so—who had saved her. So completely had the negroes vanished, that my impulse was to make a dash for her. Luckily, the resolution was not carried out, for in another moment heads peered up on all sides, until, perceiving the hippopotamus motionless, they ventured to approach it.

Their astonishment and delight seemed to know no bounds, as probably they never had seen any killed, save some little thing with a harpoon, though some of the savages do kill them by means of great, heavy weights attached to cords in trees. It is no wonder that the negroes should be anxious to capture them, as the meat, though coarse-grained, and not fat, does not taste unlike beef, and is to the hunter a most welcome and wholesome dish.

But the way in which the negroes danced, capered, and yet every now and then, glanced round with awe and terror, was perfectly ludicrous. They did not actually know whether to give way to joy or sorrow; while every now and then they would turn and worship the Indian girl in the most absurd manner, clasping their hands, kneeling, and offering her tit-bits. But at length pleasure carried the day, and, setting to work, they skinned their rare prize, and began to eat.

I, all the while, lay alighted and thirsty on a log, not daring to move, scarcely even venturing to breathe.

Skipper Fawn:

The Indian Lover's Stratagem.

BY LEWIS GARDNER.

"WHERE'S Puss, Sophia?" I asked. It was a cheery voice that asked the question. Its owner, a hale, elderly man, had just come out and seated himself beside the door opposite his wife, who was engaged on some light sewing. A pleasant scene was before them. The clearing, extending with gentle slope toward the west, a deep forest stretching away toward the right, and the slanting sunbeams casting a variegated light through the leafy branches as they fell, with mellow radiance, across the floor of the backwoods piazza.

"Carrie?" She has gone to the knoll to see if she can discover any thing of her brother. Isn't it about time he were back from the mill, husband?" "I suppose so, unless he found the bridge gone we fixed a while ago. That may be the case, for we hadn't time to make it as strong as we calculated, and the late rains must have made the creek a rushing torrent."

"Why, then he ought to have been back before now, hadn't he?" "No; I suppose if he found our bridge

gone he would go three miles further up, to try Whalon's. I hardly think that would give way."

"Then he won't be back till dark, perhaps later?" "Probably not, but you aren't going to feel uneasy about our infant, are you?"

And Humphrey Whiteside's cheery voice broke into a laugh as he asked the question—a laugh that was full of assurance and pride. For the "infant" referred to was an only son, a young man of nineteen, five feet eleven in his stockings, agile as a cat, and brave as a lion.

Good reason had the father to be proud of such a son, for he was all a father's heart could desire. And the same may be said of his family—wife, son, and daughter. The crash of 1837 had found Humphrey Whiteside, the once prosperous merchant, a ruined man in the city of St. Louis. Out of the wreck of his fortune a few hundred dollars were saved, and with this, at the instigation of his wife and children, he had removed "West," and commenced the life of a settler. The prospect of speedy independence, and a natural love of the new and romantic in the bosom of his family, had been the ruling motives that induced the step. And never had he regretted it, for, assisted by the willing spirits and hands of those dear to him, his hopes had been more than realized. The region in which he had settled was among the best along the frontier, and though yet sparsely inhabited, bade fair to become in time the nucleus for a thriving town or city. All things considered then, Humphrey Whiteside had reason to feel contented, and the pride with which he referred to his "infant" was not a false one.

"N—no; not uneasy, only I was thinking that Carrie—"

"Ah-ha, the jade!" said Mr. Whiteside, catching at the name, and speaking in a tone of pleasantry. "Gone to look for her brother George, eh? Just as though she hadn't been expecting some one else, this Saturday afternoon—the jade!"

"We mustn't envy her the society of her age naturally desires, husband," replied Mrs. Whiteside, with assumed gravity. "And then, you know, the new settler, Mr. Whalon, has besides his wife and son, two charming, intelligent girls."

"Tut—hear the woman talk! I see; you and Puss are in collusion. Talk of the charming Whalon girls—just as though their big brother, Eli, was out of the question!"

"Well, husband," said his wife, quietly. "Don't 'well' me, Sophia. I s'pose that chap will be for taking our Puss away from us some day, and then—but I won't have it!"

"Have what, Humphrey?" "Oh, how cool you keep over it," he answered, as he noticed the twinkle in her eye. "But, no one shall take Puss away yet, anyhow!"

"Has any one asked to do it?" "No; but I'm well enough convinced that some one is going to ask. Oh, I haven't been so blind during the past year as you and Puss think I have."

"Well, what have you against Eli Whalon?"

"Nothing, of course; you know I have. He's a noble chap—about equal to our George. But, he ain't a-going to have Puss in a good two years yet. But, society—why, yes, of course! There'll be enough of it in a few years. Setting that aside, I believe we're as well off certainly as though we had staid in the city and tried to recover our lost wealth—eh, wife?"

"Far better, husband," she replied, with animation. "We have recovered lost health, which is, I think, of far more importance."

"True, Sophia. I begin to feel more truly independent than I ever did before in my life. See what we've brought about in these four years! Five hundred acres of land taken up, a good nice section of it cleared, the old log-cabin we first lived in torn down and its place occupied by this cozy frame dwelling; a good log-barn and pen to shelter the young cattle growing up—no chance of being ruined by 'fall of stocks,' or 'decline in the dry-goods market'—why, Sophia, we're rich!"

And the old gentleman, who had been taking several turns across his backwoods piazza in front of his wife, again seated himself, his face aglow with joy and contentment. "You have accomplished wonders—you and George—in these three years," said the fond matron, with a beaming smile.

"Hear that now," he answered, with mock pettishness. "Just as though you yourself and Puss hadn't done your share as well."

"Oh, I didn't suppose you meant to ignore us, of course. This frontier life has done much for all of us and for none more than for Carrie."

"And now at the early age of seventeen to think of much less to have a lover—the jade!"

"There is only one drawback to our prospects, Humphrey!" "The smile upon the face of Mrs. Whiteside died as she spoke and an expression of anxiety took its place."

"What's that, wife? Now don't spoil the picture I've drawn, if you can help it!" "I don't wish to, Humphrey. But, we may as well talk of it. You know what I mean. The friendly Greek—Straight Oak! It has troubled me some lately."

A grave look appeared for a moment on

the face of her husband. But it quickly vanished as he replied:

"What, because the fellow—a rising young chief in his tribe—has shown a liking for Puss? Ha! ha! Why, Sophia, just look at his antecedents and—praise so cunningly made known to us! Don't you think we ought to feel flattered?" and again that cheery laugh rang out.

"Humphrey!"

The half-reproachful look and tone of motherly anxiety, checked the husband's levity at once. "Well, really, Sophia, I think there's no cause for anxiety on the score of Straight Oak. I know he has more than once given broad hints of how much he admires 'Skipper Fawn,' as he calls our Puss. But he's a fellow of too much sense to suppose he could ever get her for a wife. I saw the idea must be too preposterous to him in spite of his Indian conceits. Besides, I took good care to return his hints, on that subject with interest."

"But he still keeps coming around here—was here this forenoon."

"That's nothing strange. He always finds good cheer, and Puss herself is just full enough of the old Dickens to flirt with him. The mischievous jade!"

"I've talked to her about noticing him too much, and she's been cautious lately. But somehow I don't like Straight Oak's looks."

"You needn't be afraid, though. I don't think he's capable of any thing desperate."

"Dear me, what could we do if he should?" and the anxious mother gave a slight shudder. "We're in a beautiful country, husband, but I sometimes wish we'd been content with a poor region or a less promising location where there is more of a population. We've not more than twenty neighbors in a circuit of a dozen miles, and if the Indians should become hostile and break the treaty!"

"I don't believe they've forgot, or will be likely to forget, their lessons of the past," he said. "This region will soon be bought up and occupied. Meantime there's the fort with a good garrison not fifteen miles away, to keep down any rising among the scattering tribe. But—hello!"

"She roared and declared she 'd be mine. She said that she loved me best of any. But oh, the fickle, faithless queen, she's 'a'en the Carl an' left her Johnnie!"

A rich, clear voice, whose bird-like notes echoed sweetly between forest and dwelling, chirped the above refrain, and next moment the "Puss" already mentioned came around the angle of the house, whirling herself to a seat on the piazza floor, at the feet of her mother. Dark, hazel eyes, beaming with spirit and intelligence; a beautifully rounded form, tall and graceful, while an arch expression on the lovely health-flushed face attested the existence of that "mischief" of which her father had spoken.

"Oh yes—yes," he said before she was fairly seated. "She vowed and declared—exactly; but why didn't you change the gender a trifle and sing 'He vowed' and all that! Now own up, Miss Puss, that you've been looking more for him than for your brother!"

"Looking for him?" exclaimed the young forest-beauty with a slight arch of brow. "Why, Pa, Whiteside, how you talk! I don't expect him twice a day, do I? No, indeed! Mr. Straight Oak paid his gallant devoirs only this forenoon and has too much sense to visit me again so soon. Skipper Fawn has spoken!"

Nothing could exceed the droil gravity of Carrie as she sat erect, and pronounced these last words with due Indian dignity, waving her right hand as she spoke and dropping her light hat to the floor beside her.

"Take that—oh, you rascal!" cried the old gentleman, as he flung his large bandana toward her, which she adroitly dodged. "Pretend not to understand me, will you? Just as though you hadn't got those long black tresses tied up with a ribbon 'expecting—'"

"Haven't I told you I didn't expect him?" quickly interrupted the young lady, with an assumed pettishness, which the lively twinkle in her eyes contradicted. "But, if Straight Oak should happen to come this way, why—your know, Pa, the gentleman admires red, and I surely ought to pay some deference to his taste—hadn't I, Ma?"

Thus appealed to, Mrs. Whiteside, suppressing the merriment she herself caught from her husband and daughter, replied, earnestly: "Your father and I have just been talking about the Indian, Carrie. This pleasantry does no harm, but let me warn you again, child, to be very careful in your conduct toward Straight Oak. He might take a notion—"

"For my 'skulp,' as the settlers say; gracious! I wonder, now, if it wouldn't be a stroke of policy to cut off my hair, so that it shan't tempt him?" and the perverse girl put up her hand to her black, glossy tresses, glancing with assumed anxiety from mother to father.

Mrs. Whiteside was not proof against the contagion of her husband's laugh, as, with another "whisp" toward the "Puss," he said:

"Yes, it would, it would, you rascal, for when that long, lank, backwoods lover of yours, Eli Whalon, comes again, I shall tell him of your flirting—"

"What, Eli—that great booby?" "I shall tell him, I say, of your flirting, and give him permission either to pull every hair out of your head or challenge Straight Oak!"

"Now, which would you prefer, jade?" "A backwoods duel! Oh, jockey, glorious! Wouldn't that be fun! Yes; set them at it by all means—the noble red man, and the noble, more noble, most noble bordered!"

"What a magnificent sight it will be—two noble knights of different races fighting in 'dead array' for their lady love! Let this 'joust' be just outside the 'castle gates, senor,' and you, my lady mother, can't you give me something to crown the successful one? A piece of red flannel, if it shan't tempt him?"

"Straight Oak should prove victor—that's his fancy, you know; and if Eli should conquer—well, let me see; ah, that's it—a volume of—"

"Carrie! Child, hush—some one is approaching and the footsteps sound—ah!" She suddenly ceased speaking, as a dark shadow lengthened athwart the space in front, and the next moment a tall Indian emerged from the left and stood gravely before them. It was Straight Oak himself! The trio were startled for a moment at his unexpected appearance, and the look of vague uneasiness which quickly appeared, and then vanished from the face of Humphrey Whiteside, lingered longer on that of his wife. Straight Oak was indeed a noble looking Indian, and, though near nightfall, they saw he was attired as though for a long

journey. As he came near he paused, leaning lightly on a short spear, and glancing from Carrie to her father.

"My brother, Straight Oak, is accounted for a journey," said Mr. Whiteside, pleasantly. "Does he start at night, or is he only on his return?"

"No; going now—very soon," replied the Indian, gravely. "But he would ask a question of Cheerheart fore go. Then say whether ever come back. Straight Oak has long looked upon the Skipping Fawn! When he goes forth she is always before his eyes. When he sleeps she is always in his dreams. His heart always beats quicker at thoughts of her and it beats quick all time. For her he would be willing to renounce his tribe, his Manitou, and only worship hers. He would build cabin, clear land, and be as her people. Straight Oak has spoken and you have heard his words!"

Here was a declaration on which they had not calculated, and mother and daughter glanced at Mr. Whiteside with anxious looks. The latter, however, did not hesitate.

"We shall always be glad to receive Straight Oak as a brother," he said, firmly. "He is always welcome here. But the Skipping Fawn has looked upon the face of one of her own race, and her heart has gone with the look. She would never consent to wed any other besides one of her own race, because she could not be happy. Straight Oak is a noted brave, bold, fearless and comely. Many an anxious maiden of his own race is waiting to become his squaw. Let him seek for a wife among them. This must be my answer."

"And the ears of Straight Oak have been open," responded the Indian, sadly. "I would do anything for her," glancing toward the averted face of the maiden. "But you have spoken, and no more can Straight Oak say. Far away, amid the dangers of the hunt and war-trail, he will forget his sorrow."

"It ought not to give you sorrow to leave what is not fitted for you, Straight Oak," added the old man. "You will be far happier mated to one of your own people."

Straight Oak answered not a word, but turning with Indian abruptness, he stalked away, and before the trio had hardly recovered from their surprise he had entered the forest.

"Why, father!" exclaimed Carrie, "is it possible?"

"Ah, ha! Puss, what d'ye think now about flirting, eh?"

"Father, mother, do you think he meditates any evil toward us—me?"

The half-hour's conversation that followed was, it is needless to say, of a more serious character than heretofore. But Mr. Whiteside succeeded in reassuring his wife and daughter.

"The fellow is really love-sick—or thinks he is," said the old gentleman. "It will probably end in his going out of the region for awhile, leaving a glorious drunk if he can obtain the liquor, and perhaps getting knocked on the head in some wild brawl. But who's this?"

The twilight was being succeeded by the gloom of evening, and a young Indian lad, who had been seldom seen in the neighborhood, but who was nevertheless known to belong to a camp of reds a few miles away, flitted around the corner of the house.

"Ah, ha, boy, what do you want?" inquired Mr. Whiteside, as he rose and turned toward him.

"Mink Eye got full in water—hurt, much bad!" said the lad, in broken English. "Me heard cry—him holler when see me, an' say, come help 'im!"

"It's George, father—"

"Go quick, Humphrey!" interrupted the frightened mother.

But the latter had already started up, and learning where his son had met with the accident, rushed to the barn, brought out the only remaining horse, mounted and rode away like the wind.

He had been gone ten minutes when Carrie spoke to her mother, who stood anxiously by her on the knoll looking off through the gloom.

"Go in, dear mother; this night-air is too chilly for you. I will watch for awhile and they'll soon be back."

Oh, Carrie, I can not remain there alone with my anxiety. How far will your father have to go?"

"It's not over two miles; but stay, I'll go for a thicker shawl for you, and we'll both watch."

She darted back, passed around to the front, and quickly procuring the shawl hurried out. At that moment a dark, athletic figure sprang toward her, her head was enveloped in the shawl as if by magic, and she felt herself raised bodily, and carried away with feet steps, unable to utter a cry or a groan.

The maiden felt a terrible fear, but did not lose her presence of mind. Well she knew who held her. She realized that she was rapidly borne toward the woods, and that Straight Oak had plotted the whole affair, calculating to bear her forcibly away, risking all consequences of the act.

She knew when they entered the woods, and feigned to be unconscious from excessive fright. The Indian lifted her upon his horse, but in the act of springing upon the animal's back, behind her, somewhat relaxed his grasp, and with sudden desperate strength the maiden sprang from her position and succeeded in uttering two or three shrieks.

"Just as we thought; quick, George—Mr. Whiteside—the cursed rascal shan't escape!" The words came in ringing, excited tones, accompanied by a rush of feet, and then a pistol cracked close by, mingled with a woman's frenzied shriek.

Carrie Whiteside heard the commotion and just extricated herself from the shawl in time to see Straight Oak dart away on his horse, as another rifle-report, broke on the air. And the next moment found her in the arms of Eli Whalon, her father and brother standing by, and her mother rushing up with outstretched arms.

"The red devil!" muttered Eli. "Did you hit 'im, George?"

"At the worst he's only wounded. He'll get off, I think!"

The party were soon at the house, where everything was explained. Evidently, the Indian had been bribed by Straight Oak, for he was not seen again. Some of the tribe to which Straight Oak belonged, suspecting his intention and jealous of his preference for a "white squaw," had hinted at the matter in a way that reached the ears of the Whalon family. And Eli, anxious for his affianced, was coming on with her brother, meeting the alarmed father in time to head off Straight Oak. The latter never visited the region again, as his tribe soon "moved on" to a new reservation. Eli and Carrie were soon after married, but the latter never forgot her Indian lover's stratagem.

Camp-Fire Yarns.

BY CAPT. MAYNE REID.

Zeb Stump's Stratagem.

A TOUGH YARN OF AN OLD TEXAN HUNTER.

AMONG the many odd characters of the old-hunter type with whom I have come in contact, I can remember none more deserving to be called "queer," than Zebulon Stump—or "old Zeb Stump," as he was better known among his hunter confreres.

I have been all my life fond of listening to tales of adventure, in which wild animals played a part; and, whenever opportunity occurred, have solicited the teller of them. In my note-book I find more of these tales accredited to Zeb Stump than to any other man; and perhaps no other man ever met by me was capable, from his own experience, of relating so many.

I will not answer for their being all strictly true; though despite his "queerness," Zeb had a reputation for veracity, and the worst ever alleged against him was a little exaggeration. The truth is, that he enjoyed the telling of an adventurous tale, as much as his hearers did the listening to it; and he could scarce have excelled as a story-teller, without dealing in a little embellishment.

One day we were turkey-hunting together in the Mississippi bottom, not far from his own domicile, which was simply the cavity of a hollow tree. We had enjoyed a forenoon of tolerably fair sport; and, seated upon a log, well shadowed by the overtopping cottonwoods, were recruiting our strength with a "pone" of corn-bread and a "hunk" of boiled bacon, that Zeb, ever provident on such occasions, had drawn forth from his wallet.

After satisfying the inner man, I had offered him a cigar, which he declined on the excuse, that he "allers purfared a pipe." He made no objection, however, in joining me in a stomaichic, which I was wont to take along with me on these excursions, in the shape of a flask of old cognac brandy. Although unaccustomed to this peculiar spirit, Zeb pronounced it good; better'n any 'corn' he'd ever tasted.

After a second pull at the "pewter," I observed that it produced a pleasant effect upon him; and, seeing him in this cheerful mood, I determined on drawing from him a story—some adventure with wild animals, feline



SKIPPING FAWN; OR, THE INDIAN LOVER'S STRATAGEM.

or ursine—of which I knew the old hunter to have his share.

Definitely setting my trap I soon had him into it.

"Ye may talk 'bout y'r bars," began he, "an' y'r painters, an' other wild beasts bein' dang'rous, an' so they ur, unner sartin sarkinstances, ez this chile heez reezun to know. But I war onc't in a scrape w' a anymal as air konsidered tame, not more'n sixt' part the size o' cyther bar or painter. An' when I say a scrape, I mean a ugly 'un; prechaps the ugliest ever chenc'd to this yar chile, an' he hev fit both bar an' painter, to say nuthin' o' wounded buck, which air sometimes wuss than both."

"A tame anymal; an' not much larger than a tomcat at thet."

"I can't think of what animal you mean."

"Wait, young fellur, an' you'll hear all 'bout the critter I'm speakin' o'."

The old hunter had the knack of telling a story, in such a way as to bring out its points in their proper places. Knowing this, I consented to be silent.

"Twar 'bout three year ago, on my first trip to Texas. I went to see how the new country 'ud shoot me; an' it did, for I intend goin' back thar putty soon. Wal, I landed on the island o' Galveston, an' from thar I went up Buffalo bayou, to the town of Hewston."

"Thar war a fellur at Hewston who'd gone out from Tennessee. 'Uns thegither; an' in course I wanted to find him. They tolt me he wa'n't in the town, but out at a place 'bout three miles off, on the prairie, whar thar war a establishment kep' by an Englishman, for the killin' o' cattle. My ole chum hed some sort o' a post unner this Britisher to thet the slaughterin' yard belonged."

"I started off in search o' the place, goin' afut; for I wa'n't rich enuf to purvide me w' a beast, tho' I hed 'a bought one o' the best for a ten-dollar bill. Niver mind 'bout that. I r'ud upon shank's mare, which I allers purfars anyhow, 'specially when a huntin'. Hosses skeers the game."

"It war 'bout twelve o' the clock when I reech'd the cattle-killin' establishment. Thar wa'n't no house, nor the show o' anythin' like one—'ceptin' a sort o' kivered shed, whar they stowed away the hides o' the cattle they killed; for it war them an' not the meat that the bizness war carried on for. All roun' the shed run a fence made out o' posts set on thar ends, that I reck'n they must 'a hauled a good ways; for thar wa'n't a stick

o' timmer to be seed' anywhar within miles o' the place. In this fence I spied a gate, jest the same as the rest o' the inclosure, only I knew it by a pair o' posts risin' a leetle higher up than the fence itself.

"Torst this gate I derecked my steps. 'Thar warn't a human in sight, eyther outside the fence or inside o' it. But I knew it war the slaughterin' place. I ked tell thar afore I'd got 'thim half a mile o' it, by the stink o' the skins."

"I foun' the gate upon the latch. It war a double one; so openin' one half I stept inside, an' looked 'bout me.

"I kedn't see a critter o' any kind. Thar wa'n't the show o' livin' thing neyther 'bout the yard nor unner the shed, which last war open all roun'. It war cl'ar that the inclosure war dead."

"Zeb Stump, sez I to myself, 'ye've hed y'r long walk for nuthin', an' under a durned sweaty sun too. It air cl'ar thar's nobody 'bout these diggins, neyther man nor anymal, so you may turn roun' an' track back to Hewston."

"But jest as I'd made this reflexshun, a sown reech'd my ears that tolt me I war unner a mistake; an' at the same time I spied four ugly varmints, the like o' which I'd niver seed' afore, tho' from what I'd heern o' 'em I know'd to be English bulld-dogs."

"They 'pear'd comin' right out o' the shed, an' war makin' straight torst me, thar teeth stickin' outside thar lips, an' thar eyes glitterin' from four as ugly faces as ever war sot upon the head o' canyone."

"They didn't come on in anythin' o' a run; but crouchin' w' thar bellies flattened out along the groun', jest like a painter stealin' on a turkey or a deer. F' all thet thar war no mistakin' thar intension. It war plain enuf by the glint o' thar eyes, an' thar angry growlin'."

"I tried coaxin', same as you'd do w' other dogs, I kedn't no use; they only growld angrier; an' thinkin' to skeer them off, I grupp'd up some donicks an' begun flingin' 'em right in thar teeth."

"It war the foolishest thing I ked 'a done; for the first stone that fell among 'em set 'em stark mad; an' afore I ked throw a second, the hul four war aroun' me 'thim bitin' reech o' my shins."

"I hedn't a thing in my hands; for not expectin' to scare up any game, I'd kim away from the town 'thout fetchin' my rifle along w' me. Thar war a green trick, anyway, an' I war niver caught in the same fix since."

"In course I war helpless; an' for a spell I kedn't think o' what I shed do. I'd ang'd the dogs past any hope o' pleasin' 'em; an' from what I'd heern o' the nater o' them anymals, an' what I then seed' for myself, I war sartin they intended 'tarin' me to pieces."

"I looked roun' to see ef thar war any chance to git out o' thar way. I'd got 'bout half 'cross the inclosure, when they fust kim rushin' torst me. 'Thar wa'n't nuthin' in sight, 'ceptin' a pump that stud right in the middle o' the yard. But it war one o' the tallest kind, and I seed' at a glimp it war my only hope for salvashun."

"Gruppin' holt o' the handle, I speeled up; an' afore any o' the ugly brutes ked git thar ugly teeth on me, I war out o' thar reech."

"I wa'n't so far out o' it as to feel safe; the anymals kep' springin' up an' tryin' to grup my legs, the which I hed to draw up unner me, arter the fashion o' a tailor."

"When they hed goed on w' thar jumpin' an' yowlin' for 'bout half-an-hour they begun to git tired themselves; an' at last seen' they kedn't reech me, they gin that game up."

"I hed hopes they'd go 'bout thar bizness and g'e me a chance o' gittin' out o' the yard. But I soon seed' they hed no notion o' doin' so. 'Thar bizness war to purtect the place ag'in' thieves an' interlopers, an' they hed talk me for eyther one or t'other. If any o' 'em did stray away for a bit the others kep' guard roun' the pump; an' whenever I showed sign o' slippin' down, they'd spring forward an' start up a fresh spell o' barkin', grinnin' an' growlin'."

"I war in the wust o' fixes, an' I know'd it. Hed it been a painter, or even a bar, thar mout 'a been some chance o' escapin' arter a tussle; but I'd heerd a deal 'bout them English bulld-dogs, an' thet whenever they g'e a grup they don't let go ag'in' till they've tuk the piece out. They looked jest like it, as they showed thar ugly teeth all roun' me. Ef thar hed been only one o' 'em I mout 'a tried fight w' my naked hands, an' choked the anymal till deth. But w' four o' the varmints, the thing war plainly impossible."

"Thar war no help for't but stay whar I war; an' so I squatted down on the summic o' the pump."

"An' thar I sot for six mortyal hours, w' the four bulld-dogs growlin' an' grinnin' unnerneath, an' at the end o' thet time showin' no sign o' thar intension to leave off!"

"An' the way I cussed British bulld-dogs an' British brutes as wud own sech cruel critters, an' eytherin' else that air British besides—the way I did cuss 'em mout 'a started old Dave Crockett's ghost out o' its grave, which wa'n't so very fur away."

"But the cussin' did no good; prechaps made things wuss; for the four varmints below, as ef they knew thet I war ag'in' them, an' thar country, only growld the louder, an' snatched thar teeth all the angrier."

"I war as angry as them, an' at thet parteeckler minute, I'd 'a gi'n a hul yur o' my life to 'a hed holt o' my rifle, or even a good-sized knife. But it wa'n't no use. I hedn't weepun o' any kind. I war as helpless as a babe o' the woods."

"My persishun too war durned unkomfortable. The head o' the pump wa'n't flat, but heved off to a sherpish top, on which I hed skimp room for my starn. I kedn't 'a stood it nohow, but for the pump-handle on which my feet foun' a sort o' supportin' place."

"What war to be done? For the life o' me I kedn't think. The only hope I hed war, thet as it war gettin' on torst sundown some o' the people belongin' to the slaughter-yard mout be comin' back for the night."

"But then thar wa'n't no appearance o' a sleepin' place, an' they moutn't."

"The thought o' bein' beseeched thar all night wa'n't to be toll'rated. I kedn't 'a stood it ef I tried. An' ef I should drop off o' my perch, eyther through bein' sleepy or tired out, it ked only be inter the teeth o' them British bulld-dogs."

"Talk o' the Munroe doctryne. Ef ever man believed in't this chile did at thet hour. I'd 'a gone in for ar'arin' every Europpian off the soil o' this contyent, an' thar dogs along w' 'em."

"I got so riled at last that I didn't know how I shed stan' it any longer. I'd mout made up my mind to jump down among the dogs an' take my chance o' a skrimmage w' the hul four, tho' no doubt they'd 'a tore me to pieces."

"What purvented me air prechaps the most kevous thing in the hul story. I'll stake lurge, young fellur, ye can't guess it, nor how this chile at last got cl'ar o' thet scrape."

"I haven't the slightest idea."

"Wal, listen, an' I'll tell ye. Afore leavin' Mississippi I'd heerd they war greatly troubled w' rats at the port o' Galveston, same as on the wharfs o' Natchez an' Noo Orleans. Now thar chanced to be a fellur I know'd, as hed invented a pizen for killin' 'em. It war a sort o' compursishun the varmints war mad to eet; an' soon as they

swallowed it, over they coflummixed, jest as ef they'd been shot dead. It war in Natchez I met the fellur, an' he knowin' I war on my way to Galveston, gin me a kuppel o' cakes o' his pizen stuff, askin' me to make a trial o' it on the rats o' Texas."

"Jest by chance I hed them two cakes in my coat-pocket, an' as I sot upon the pump the idee came inter my head to try it on the bulld-dogs. It wa'n't unlike biskit-bread, an' maybe they mout take on to it as the rats did."

"Pallin' one o' the cakes out o' my pocket, I broke it inter crumbs. Then pretendin' to become friendly w' the brutes below, I throwed the pieces down right afore thar noses."

"They jumped at 'em, same as the fellur said the rats 'ud do, an' in less than three minnits arterward the four bulld-dogs war sprawlin' over the groun' an' frothin' at the mouth, as ef they'd goed suddenly mad."

"An' in less than ten more, they war lyin' on thar sides, stretch'd out to thar full spread, an' dead as bucks—every dog o' 'em!"

"Thar wa'n't no need for me keepin' any longer parched on the pump, an' in course I descended."

"I'd hardly got to the groun', when I seed' a big fellur ride in through the gate, an' up to the place whar I war starnin'. It wa'n't my ole Tennessee playmate; but from his looks an' the way he kim swaggin' on I ked tell it war the owner o' the slaughter-yard. By his red face an' the turned-up pug o' a snout, any one ked tell he war a born Britisher; an' durn me, ef his picter war so fur diff'rent from the anymals as wur lyin' dead unner the spout o' the pump."

"The minnit he sot eyes on them, an' got a idee o' what hed happened, he jumped off o' his hoss, an' kim at me as fierce as any o' his dogs hed done."

"Thar he made the biggest mistake he'd ever made in his life. What w' the trouble I'd hed w' the dogs, an' his impence as he squarred at me, the Munroe doctryne got riz in me, a'most to bu'stin'; an' in less'n ten minnits I made the Britisher squeal out quarter."

"I left him bleedin' at the nose, w' a pair o' eyes, each hevin' a black ring roun' it, like the squinters o' a coon. Hed 'eezun tur be thankful I didn't levee both o' 'em hangin' on his cheeks; but arter his cryin' enuf, I war contented to let him alone; an' g'ivin' his dead dogs another kick, to satisfy my spite at 'em, I clur'd out o' his stinkin' yard, an' tuk the back track for Hewston."

"I don't blame any man for getting lazy. It is constitutional in warm weather. I have not a lazy bone in my body. (I can't say so much about my muscles; but I believe I could rest half of my time with a great deal of ease, and not put too fine a point on it, I could stand it if the time was doubled."

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ON THE ROAD TO SLEEP.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Oh, 'tis an awful night to sleep,
Indeed it can't be beat;
And on my bed I roll and toss,
Half-smothered with the heat,
And vainly trying to compose
My weary mind to rest,
By quoting poetry and prose,
And thinking of the Best.

And by and by above my head
(Alas to dreams of freedom)
Three pecks of wild musketoes sing
The battle-cry of 'Bled 'em;
But I will stand the shock awhile,
And struggle like a man,
And make some blood fly from my foes,
And feathers, if I can.

With both arms awaying like a sledge,
My anger to declare,
I make my savage combatants
Turn summersaults in air;
But they outflank me on the left,
And charge me in the face—
I make a dash for force of arms,
And wipe out the disgrace.

But ah! I nearly broke my arm
In trying to knock one down,
And there I knocked another clean
The other side of sundown.
Yet quick they come to time again,
Unmindful of reverses,
Their ranks are straightaway filled,
Fast as my hand disperses.

It's little use to fight, and so,
To make the battle over,
I'll just retreat in splendid style,
And get me under cover.
Now here I lie beside my arms,
And press a soldier's pillow,
And safely rest from war's alarms,
And the musketo's bill-oh!

Beat Time's Notes.

MY BOY.

My father's children were all smart. Smartness is our family failing, and is also about the only fault our neighbors could find with us, and you may believe they did a good deal of hunting around for other faults. My wife's husband is especially smart; but my modesty forbids me mentioning it, and modesty is one of the family's household goddesses and is very much respected.